



ASCENDANCE
OF A
BOOKWORM

I'll do anything to
become a librarian!

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Part 4: Founder of the Royal Academy's So-Called Library Committee Vol. 8 Cover Art



Short Story Collection «Volume 1» Cover Art







Christmas Card 2017



Christmas Card 2018



Drama CD 1



Drama CD 2



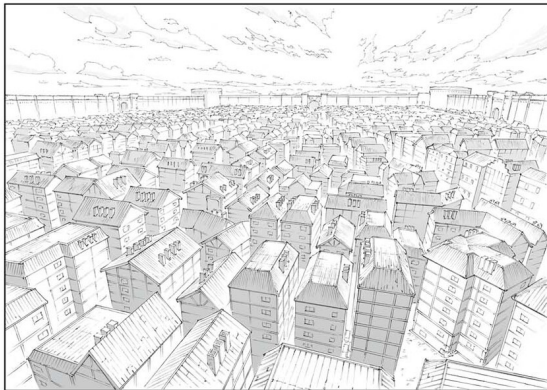
Drama CD 3

Overview of Ehrenfest



Miya Kazuki's Secret Lore

I was deeply moved when I received this rough draft. This is the kind of scale you only see with an anime adaptation. The closer buildings comprise the poor part of town, and the farther ones house the rich, so I asked that they become more vibrant as they fade into the distance. The poor buildings are dark and covered in soot, whereas the rich ones are painted.



Ehrenfest's South Gate



Miya Kazuki's Secret Lore

We shared the designs that Suzuka-san had made for the manga adaptation with the anime team, which influenced how things like this gate turned out, for example. Even back then, I already had such a clear mental image of what I wanted that I was able to send several reference photos. The doors are made of wood so that even commoners can close them, but truth be told, in the original work, there's a second gate of stone that only the archduke's magic can move. It was deemed too much for the anime, though, so it was excluded.



Myne's House – Exterior



Miya Kazuki's Secret Lore

I actually cried out in surprise when I saw the completed picture. The anime team took great care in showing that the first two floors are made of stone while everything above is made of wood. That said, the first version was too bright. I asked them to imagine the materials as old and weathered and requested that they use darker colors instead.



Myne's House – Bedroom



Miya Kazuki's Secret Lore

It's important to note that the windows are made of wood, not glass. I asked to emphasize the crude, rustic atmosphere of the house by replacing any furniture at the end of the bed with simple boxes, maybe with baskets and the like sitting atop them. Suzuka-san had already taken care of this in the manga, so we shared those documents with the anime team as well. In case you're curious, the crate next to the window is there so that even Tuuli can toss the family's trash outside!

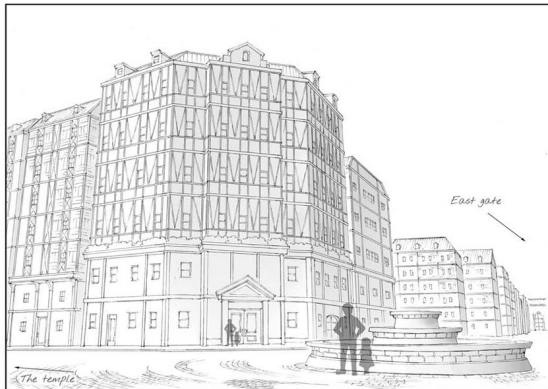


Merchant's Guild – Exterior



Miya Kazuki's Secret Lore

Just like Myne's house, the bottom two floors of these buildings are made of stone, and everything above is made of wood. The anime team referenced Suzuka-san's work in the manga and photographs of various European cities, the latter especially to see how their plazas were structured. The buildings facing the plaza are more rounded, and since they had to be colored, I made sure to ask for some variety. The result exudes the kind of vibe you'd only see in a rich part of town.

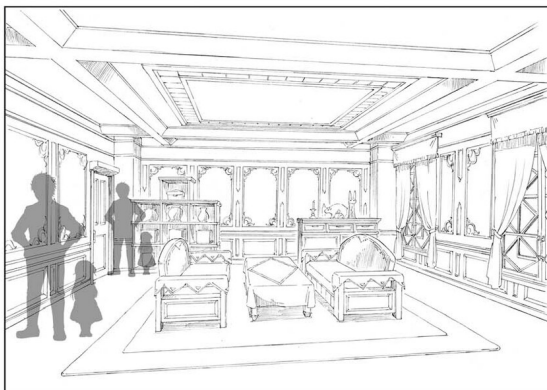


Othmar Company – Parlor



Miya Kazuki's Secret Lore

The design for this room was made specially for the anime. My main requests were that the sofas not look too comfortable—they're little more than cloth spread across wood, after all—and that the walls be white, since the parlor is located on the Othmar Company's second floor. The shelves and other background details were all courtesy of the anime team.



Gilberta Company – Exterior



Miya Kazuki's Secret Lore

.....
This building is largely the same as the Merchant's Guild. It isn't connected to a plaza, though, so there was no need to give it the same rounded design. This, too, was based on Suzuka-san's manga, so it turned out exactly as I imagined. The coloring was new, and while I was impressed, I ended up asking the team to add more dirt to the ivory. It looks darker now than before, but in the original work, the stone is in a much worse state. (Haha.)
.....

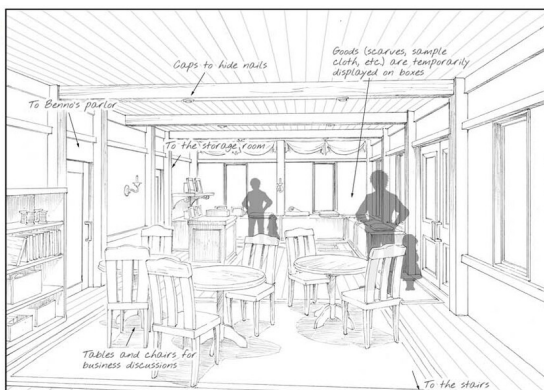


Gilberta Company – First Floor Interior



Miya Kazuki's Secret Lore

Suzuka-san had already designed this room as well, so it was largely kept the same. Any other details were entrusted to the anime team. I did ask them to preserve the white decor, but they elected to balance it out with more wooden furniture to better emphasize the austerity. Of course, the team ran all these decisions by me.



The High Priest's Hidden Room



Miya Kazuki's Secret Lore

This room received its first design for the anime, and it required such overwhelming attention to detail. The most important parts, in my eyes, were ensuring that the desk was tidy and wide enough to brew on and putting all the ingredients Ferdinand would need right beside it for easy access. I also made sure there were books stacked on the floor and other such features to give the place a messy vibe.

During the transition from the rough illustration to the finished one, I asked the team to include several more details, such as a roller shade of sorts above the windows. I shared these with the manga team afterward.





Part 4: Founder of the Royal Academy's So-Called Library Committee Vol. 5 Color Art Sketch



Part 4: Founder of the Royal Academy's So-Called Library Committee Vol. 6 Color Art Sketch



Part 4: Founder of the Royal Academy's So-Called Library Committee Vol. 7 Color Art Sketch



Part 4: Founder of the Royal Academy's So-Called Library Committee Vol. 8 Color Art Sketch



Part 4: Founder of the Royal Academy's So-Called Library Committee Vol. 5 Cover Art Sketch



Short Story Collection «Volume 1» Color Art Sketch



Part 4: Founder of the Royal Academy's So-Called Library Committee Vol. 7 Cover Art Sketch



Part 4: Founder of the Royal Academy's So-Called Library Committee Vol. 6 Cover Art Sketch



Part 4: Founder of the Royal Academy's So-Called Library Committee Vol. 8 Cover Art Sketch



Part 4: Founder of the Royal Academy's So-Called Library Committee Vol. 7 Alternative Cover Art Sketch



Part 1: Daughter of a Soldier
Vol. 1 (Junior Bunko) Cover Art Sketch



Short Story Collection «Volume 1» Cover Art Sketch



Christmas Card 2017 Sketch



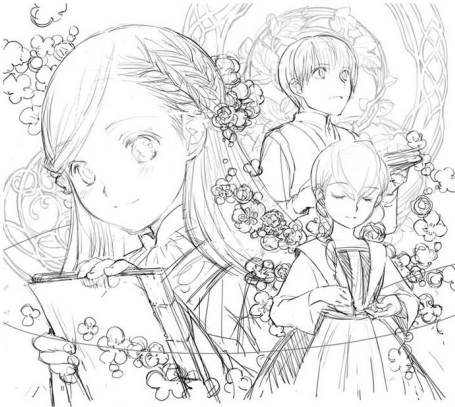
Christmas Card 2016 Sketch



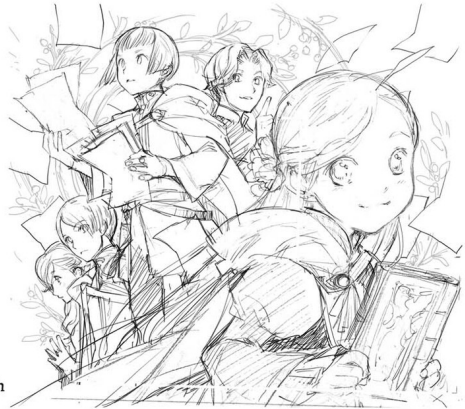
Christmas Card 2018 Sketch



Drama CD 1 Sketch



Drama CD 2 Sketch



Drama CD 3 Sketch

Liz's Apprentice Selection







THAT IS, UNLESS I JOIN A STORE LIKE YOURS.

THEN I COULD ACTUALLY BECOME A MERCHANT, RIGHT?



GRAB

YOUR BROTHER'S GUARANTEED TO TAKE OVER, ISN'T HE?

CALM DOWN! GEEZ!



YEAH.

I'M DONE FOR.



AND THAT'S THAT. LIZ REFUSES TO BACK DOWN.

Sigh



PER-FECT!

HM?

I... GUESS SO?



I WON'T GIVE UP!

THEN I'M GOING TO KEEP TELLING DAD THAT I WANT TO BE A MERCHANT.

ROAR



End

Mana-Sensing and Marriage Partners

“Oh...?”

We had all gathered in the dormitory to study for the knight course when it happened: the noise intensified, and I suddenly felt like I was being watched. I scanned my surroundings, searching for the cause, when Lady Natalie peered up at me from her work.

“Lady Judithe, is something the matter?”

I couldn’t even answer. Everything looked the same as before, but the change was unmistakable. My fellow students could suddenly be divided into two groups: those with a strong presence, and those with a weak one. The sensation was so odd that goose bumps formed all over my body, and I struggled just to set my pen down.

Wait... Is this mana-sensing?!

I was now painfully aware of people who had previously never even caught my eye. I stood up in shock, causing a clatter that made everyone look my way. Mana stirred within the room. I could feel it all, and it was so overwhelming that I made straight for the door.

The others called out to me. I didn’t feel good about ignoring them, but I wouldn’t have been able to hide my emotions. I was probably bright red with embarrassment.

“Did something happen?” asked my attendant Frederika. For as long as I was away from home, she was my closest companion and the eldest woman with whom I could discuss my situation.

“Frederika, I... I...”

The words refused to come out. I didn’t know how to say that I’d developed mana-sensing and that I was having a hard time getting used to it. As it turned out, though, I didn’t need to say anything else; Frederika touched me, and her eyes widened.

“Oh? Your mana... Aah! Congratulations!”

Mana-sensing was a trait that developed in one’s body between the ages of ten and fifteen. It was a secondary sexual characteristic for nobles—the ability to sense those with a mana capacity similar to one’s own. You could quite literally *feel* who would make a good marriage partner, as mana disparities made it hard to have children.

“It suddenly felt like the room got noisy,” I said. “Then it felt like everyone was watching me. I just couldn’t calm down. What should I do?”

It wasn’t just that I could sense all the mana around me; others could sense mine as well. I wasn’t actively searching for a partner, but

my body was signaling that I was ready for marriage. It was so embarrassing that I wanted to die.

“You will get used to it soon.”

“Guh... But *how* soon? A bell? A day?”

This was a huge problem to me, but Frederika just giggled. “How impatient. I cannot remember how long it took for me—so much time has passed since then—but I *can* tell you this: when you want to escape the mana and drop the social act, use your hidden room.”

Hidden rooms were made using one’s own mana and stood apart from the rest of the world; being inside one meant not being able to sense anything on the outside. I’d seldom used mine before, but its importance was now clear to me. I wanted to hide away from everyone else’s mana until it was less overwhelming.

“Though if you stay in there forever, you will never get used to mana-sensing.”

“Ngh...”

Frederika had reminded me of my hidden room and then immediately advised me not to use it. Was my discomfort amusing to her?

“We must inform your parents,” she said. “Your development of mana-sensing means the time has come to consider your marriage prospects. Expect things to get a lot busier going forward.”

If such remarks had come from my mother, I would surely have protested and told her not to rush me. Frederika, however, was the attendant of an extended family member; I couldn’t speak so casually with her. It seemed best to keep my distance until my thoughts stopped racing and I felt better equipped to deal with my new emotions.

“I shall entrust that to you,” I said. “I was so shocked that I abandoned my studies and rushed out of the common room. I must go back.”

Not giving Frederika a chance to respond, I took my leave. My cheeks were red and warm despite the winter cold. I gave them a few sobering slaps, but it didn’t help. The others were bound to notice something was wrong.

“Ngh... I can’t go back to them like this. What am I to do?”

“Judithe!” Leonore called out from down the hall; she must have come looking for me. “Is everything okay? We couldn’t believe it when you rushed out of the common room like that.”

“Leonore...” was the most I could manage, and then it hit me—even as she approached, I couldn’t sense anything from her. Was her mana capacity that much higher than mine? On the one hand, that sucked—it went to show how superior archnobles were to mednobles—but on the other, I was relieved to have some peace.

“Well, um... it seems my mana-sensing has developed,” I said. “It happened so suddenly that I didn’t know how to react.”

“Aah, yes. It does take a while to get used to it. You went to discuss it with your attendant, then?”

I nodded, relieved to have found someone who understood. “She was overjoyed and said we need to contact my parents. I tried to explain how overwhelming it was, but she didn’t get it; she said she barely remembered the days when she had to go through it all.”

“You can confide in me, if you want. We girls are the only ones who can enter Lady Rozemyne’s retainer room, so why don’t we go there?”

Lady Rozemyne was back in Ehrenfest, and our male colleagues weren’t allowed up on the third floor. Indeed, we had a lot more privacy there than we were used to in the castle; Leonore, Brunhilde, Lieseleta, Philine, and I were the only ones with access to our lady’s retainer room.

“Please,” I replied.

“You go ahead. I shall return to the others for a moment and do my best to cover for you.”

I thanked Leonore, then went straight to the retainer room. It was pleasantly still, maybe because it was at the far end of the dormitory and Lady Rozemyne wasn’t around.

“You developed mana-sensing?” Brunhilde asked me.

“Yes...”

“Though I consider that cause to celebrate, I understand your desire to keep it secret. Until you grow used to it, at least.” She took some sweets from the nearby shelves, then plated them with a knowing smile.

Brunhilde was right—I wanted someone to sympathize with my worries, not commend me for my sudden growth. “My attendant Frederika said I would get used to it, but how long will that really take?”

“Let’s see... Ten days, perhaps?”

“Maybe not even that,” Lieseleta added. “Mine stopped bothering me after five.”

I clenched my fists on my lap. Both estimates were a lot longer than I’d anticipated.

Lieseleta served Brunhilde some tea—the cup made a gentle *click* as it touched the table—and then smiled at me. “For the first three days or so, you won’t need to worry about others noticing the change in you.”

“What do you mean?” I asked, my eyes widening.

She leisurely made tea for Leonore before returning her attention to me, a gentle look in her green eyes. “Your senses changed abruptly,

and now you are extremely sensitive to the mana of those around you. But your own mana is currently unstable and can be sensed only by those close enough to touch you.” Her mana swayed as she set a cup in front of me. I could sense it.

“I can feel yours, but you can’t feel mine?”

“I can, but only when we touch. Like this.” She reached out to demonstrate. “It feels weak and somewhat distant. Could that be because of a gap between our capacities?”

Out of all the girls in the room, Lieseleta was the only one whose mana I could sense. Two of the others were archnobles, and Philine was too young to have developed mana-sensing.

“Your mother would normally teach you these things, but that isn’t an option here at the Royal Academy...” Lieseleta continued. “There must be so much you are uncertain about.”

“You *could* put your practical lessons on hold and return home for a short while,” Brunhilde said. She gave me a trepidatious look and then added, “Not that I would recommend it...”

I asked her to elaborate.

“Once your parents find out about this, they will invite a plethora of men to celebrate whether you like it or not. You feel embarrassed about your mana-sensing and would rather it not be touched upon, correct? You should stay at the Royal Academy until you are prepared for what will come next.”

Brunhilde explained that her parents had thrown her a massive party. To make matters worse, her father had told her to select a potential groom from among the countless men in attendance. The very thought made my cheeks redden and my eyes tear up. I turned to Leonore, hoping she could ease my concerns... but she returned a vague smile.

“As I am not my house’s successor, my celebration was not so grand. But several men *were* invited.”

“But that’s just, like... an archnoble thing, right?” I shot a desperate glance at my last hope. “Lieseleta, you didn’t have to go through anything like that, did you?”

She took a sip of tea and gave me a troubled smile. “Yours is an unenviable position. Not only are you unable to consult your mother about this, but you are fated to have a celebration waiting for you as soon as you get home. Though I understand the importance of such events, the trial ahead will not be easy.”

“What? What?! Um...”

I was at a complete loss. Did even mednobles hold such gatherings? Leonore and Brunhilde eyed me with sympathy as I stared on in shock.

As I sat there stunned, Leonore gave me a commiserative smile.

“Celebrations of this nature are held during winter socializing or near the Starbinding when relatives and associates are easier to contact.”

“My mana-sensing developed at the end of summer,” Brunhilde added, looking equally sympathetic, “so I was emotionally prepared by the time my celebration came around. You will not have that luxury.”

“No way... No way!” I cried. “Can I prevent the celebration somehow?” I tried to picture it—all those people coming together to find out I was ready for marriage—and my face grew so hot that I thought it might catch fire.

Leonore shook her head. “Parents consider it a crucial opportunity to find their children suitable marriage candidates.”

“If your attendant has contacted yours, they might even be preparing as we speak,” Brunhilde noted.

My elders wore smiles as they encouraged me to accept my fate. I was doomed to have a celebration at the end of the approaching winter.

“Can you at least tell me what to expect?” I asked. “Nobody’s ever invited me to such a celebration!”

“That goes without saying. Their purpose is to put women who have just developed mana-sensing in the same room as compatible, unmarried men. The men find it just as embarrassing as we do, so we’re all in the same boat, at least...”

The attendees of such gatherings comprised the female host, her potential suitors, and their guardians. It couldn’t have been more on the nose! My head spun like crazy until my eyes finally came to rest on Philine, who was sipping tea like this had nothing to do with her.

“How are you so calm, Philine? This is your future too! You’re only a year younger than me, so soon enough...”

“I cut ties with my father and now live under Lady Rozemyne’s protection. I sincerely doubt I will receive such a celebration.” The gatherings were held so that parents could announce their daughter was of marriageable age, so indeed, a girl without parents had nothing to worry about.

“Ah...! So if *I* cut ties with *my* father, then—”

“Do not be ridiculous, Judithe. As embarrassing as this might be, it cannot be worth casting aside your house. Some consider these ceremonies their parents’ way of showing how much they care about them.”

“Wha...?”

“Some daughters don’t receive a mana-sensing celebration, which is taken as a sign that their fathers don’t intend to find partners for them. Be it for lack of a dowry or what have you.”

I didn’t know what to say. Philine’s strained relationship with her

father would doubtless have a tremendous impact on her marriage prospects. Would she let Lady Rozemyne hold a celebration for her? If so, would the socialites not tear her apart for relying on someone other than her family to such an extent?

“You need not worry about me, Judithe,” she said. “As things stand, I would only find it troublesome if my father tried to play matchmaker.”

I was well aware of her family situation, so why hadn’t I thought before opening my mouth? I could only imagine what she must have thought of someone so fortunate declaring she would cut ties with her parents just to avoid a little embarrassment. I slumped my shoulders, crestfallen.

Brunhilde patted me on the back. “There is *one* way to escape the celebration. If your father has already chosen a partner for you, then you can skip straight to the color-mixing and engagement announcement. Might that be the case for you?”

“Color-mixing and an engagement?! Absolutely not. My father has never said a word about any suitors.”

Our conversation had escalated from my mana-sensing to a celebration to meeting suitors to an immediate engagement. I was being made to answer questions about all sorts of topics I’d never even thought about before.

I turned to Leonore, whose future plans were already in the works. She would soon return to Ehrenfest to marry Cornelius. As they were both archnobles and retainers to Lady Rozemyne, it wouldn’t have been strange for their parents to have arranged their union, but it was said they had naturally fallen in love.

“Um, there are a few more things I want to ask before I speak with Mother or Father...” I said. “What do people look for in a marriage partner? What makes an engagement good or bad? How is one decided...?”

Everyone’s eyes fell on Leonore, who already had a partner.

“Well, um... What can I say except that Liebeskhilfe the Goddess of Binding was very kind to me? I fell for Cornelius while he strove to serve Lady Rozemyne as best he could. It just so happened that our mana capacities matched, there weren’t any issues with our rank or status, and the man I was interested in returned my feelings.”

“So it was all a coincidence...?” I asked, entirely unconvinced.

Lieseleta giggled. “I doubt Leonore could tell you much else. The criteria for a suitable partner vary not only by status but also by the standards of one’s house.”

“Then what about you, Lieseleta? You might be a better example for me, seeing as we’re both mednobles. *And* you’re a fifth-year. You’ve spoken to your parents about it, haven’t you? Plenty of men

have been asking for your hand in marriage, in case you weren't aware."

In many ways, Lieseleta was the total package. She was deeply considerate, a talented embroiderer, and unbelievably close to the archducal family for a mednoble. Better still, her elder sister was engaged to Lord Eckhart and recognized as Lord Bonifatius's prized disciple.

Lieseleta's eyes wandered, then she rested a hand on her cheek. "As the successor of my house, I don't believe I can be a useful example to someone with a younger brother."

"Come again?"

"Angelica is my only sister, and we do not have a brother."

I still didn't understand, so Lieseleta elaborated. Her elder sister would normally have been the successor, but theirs was a house of attendants; Angelica had forfeited the role the moment she chose to tread the path of a knight. She was also engaged to Lord Eckhart and due to become a second wife. If something happened to Lieseleta, there wouldn't be anyone to take over their house.

I, on the other hand, belonged to a house of knights that served Giebe Kirnberger. I also had several younger siblings, so my parents would want me to get married and move out as soon as I could. I wasn't the successor, and since my house wasn't aligned with either the former Veronica faction or the Leisegangs, I didn't have any harsh restrictions on whom I could choose as a partner. Unless they were a true eccentric, my parents wouldn't mind anyone with the right status and mana capacity.

I guess we're in pretty distinct situations, even if we are both mednobles serving Lady Rozemyne.

"I intend to prioritize my house's wishes and take a groom," Lieseleta concluded. "I want to serve the archducal couple as my parents do, so I asked them to consider that when selecting a partner for me."

In other words, she wasn't going to choose someone based on love. I simply nodded, but Brunhilde and Leonore gave half smiles.

"Our apologies in advance," Brunhilde said. "I am of Groschel, and Leonore is a direct descendant of the Leisegangs, so we would never be permitted to marry any of the former Veronica faction nobles surrounding Lord Wilfried and the aub."

In the long term, they were expected to form tighter cooperative bonds with Lord Wilfried's retainers. But that would prove difficult at the current moment.

"Hopefully we can repair that relationship somewhat come spring, when Lord Wilfried visits Leisegang regarding the printing industry. It will soon be five whole years since Lady Veronica was deposed.

Though it seems like ages to us, to our parents and grandparents, barely enough time has passed for their wrath to cool.”

Well, here comes all the faction stuff again.

It never felt relevant to me—probably because of where I grew up. Kirnberger was too concerned with its country gate to mire itself in faction politics. We were the only Ehrenfest province to have one, so it was the pride and duty of our knights to protect it.

Giebe Kirnberger being one step removed from the duchy’s factions meant my parents and near relatives seldom gave them much thought at home. My upbringing had put me in the same mindset. I only really became aware of the duchy’s factions when Lady Veronica was deposed and the balance of power began to shift all over the place, but as Lady Rozemyne didn’t think much about factions either, I’d ended up in a strange situation where I served the archducal family without really understanding its politics.

Does that make me a failure of a retainer? No, that can’t be right... I’ve felt the tension between factions before. It just doesn’t prey on my mind constantly like it does for Brunhilde and the others...

As I simultaneously critiqued and defended my attitude, the others continued their discussion. Philine’s voice cut through my musing.

“You’re the successor of your house as well, right, Brunhilde? Do you also intend to follow your father’s wishes and take a groom?”

“Well, successors *do* need to value their parents’ opinions...” Brunhilde replied with a vague smile. It was rare to see her so evasive, considering how quick she normally was to speak her mind. “No matter whether I take a groom or marry into another house, what matters most for me is benefiting House Groschel. If accepting a certain partner will aid the giebe, I shan’t let my emotions get in the way. But of course, I will also need the consent of both my parents. It will not be a simple matter.”

Daughters of giebes sure seemed to have it rough. They had commitments that hadn’t even crossed my mind. I felt like I was drowning from mana-sensing alone; I didn’t have it in me to contemplate the duties of a successor or the ideal traits for my future partner.

“That sure sounds like a heavy burden to bear... Doesn’t it, Philine?” I looked to her for agreement, relieved not to have the same kind of weight on my shoulders.

My fellow retainer batted her grass-green eyes in confusion. “You *do* know that I intend to inherit my house, right? I’m its only legal successor now that Konrad entered the orphanage. I don’t intend to let Jonsara and my father take the estate and belongings our mother and forebears left us. In that sense, I suppose I don’t have parental consent to worry about, but I still need to find someone willing to marry into

my family.”

I was at a loss for words, unable to do anything but stare at Philine. She was younger than me and hadn't even developed mana-sensing, yet she was already thinking about her future partner. It was like my lack of thought had just whacked me over the head.

“If those are your criteria, would Damuel not be perfect for you?” Brunhilde asked. “As a second son, he does not have a house to inherit.”

“Do remember that he compressed his mana extensively to match Lady Brigitte,” Lieseleta interjected. “You would need to follow in his footsteps and work just as hard to be on his level again.”

Both girls knew about Philine's feelings for Damuel—not that she was doing much to hide them. She looked away, her cheeks bright red from the teasing.

“Though such an arrangement would work perfectly for me, Damuel wouldn't even consider getting engaged to a mere child. That's why... I want to develop mana-sensing as soon as possible.”

“Hm? You *want* to develop mana-sensing?” I asked. It was hard to imagine someone longing for the embarrassment I was going through or the feeling that everyone was measuring your mana.

“But of course. Once I do, I'll be able to tell whether my capacity matches Lord Damuel's. It'll give me a clear goal to work toward. Not to mention, it might lead to him seeing me more as a woman. Mana-sensing should change all sorts of things for the better.”

Oh no. Once again, I wasn't using my head...

Seeing everyone else have such clear prospects in mind made me start to panic a little.

“Indeed, being able to sense someone's mana is the first step toward understanding their potential as a partner,” Brunhilde said. “I pray that your sensing develops soon.”

“If you are resolved to inherit your house, then you will not be able to rise to the rank of mednoble through marriage,” Lieseleta added. “You will continue to face belittlement in the shadows. Pick your groom carefully based on their personality and status.”

Philine went an even brighter shade of red as everyone continued to support her first love. She floundered a little, then jabbed a finger in my direction. “Hold on a moment. We're meant to be focusing on *Judithe's* future partner, not mine.”

“Wha...?” I choked.

“Oh, that's right. This tea party was for *Judithe*.”

As I gazed around at my colleagues, I saw them all watching me with sparkling eyes. The tide had turned so quickly.

“*Judithe*, what are *you* looking for in a partner?”

“Will you return to Kirnberger after your wedding?”

“Do you want to be like Ottilie and return to your lady’s service once you’ve reared your children? If so, then you should consider marrying someone who lives in the Noble’s Quarter.”

Not a single answer came to mind. My cheeks went red either out of embarrassment at their curiosity or shame that I was utterly speechless.

Please stop! I’m not like all of you! I haven’t thought about my future in the slightest!

Despite my silent self-reproach, I picked up my tea and took a long sip. As a proud member of Lady Rozemyne’s retinue, I wasn’t going to admit I was completely and utterly unprepared.

I need an escape route! How do I get out of this?!

Even jumping back into the pit of shifting mana that was the common room would have felt better than trying to answer the questions thrust upon me. I glared at the door, at which point an ordonnanz arrived. Cornelius was asking Leonore for help with our study session.

“Let us go at once!” I declared, almost jumping for joy. “Cornelius needs our help! This is most convenient, as there are still some parts of next year’s written lessons I don’t understand.”

“Oh, so you’re ready to return to the common room?” Leonore asked. “Very well. I’m glad to have been of service.” She took hold of my cape, and at that moment, I was overcome with a crushing sense of dread.

Oh no, no, no, no!

There was no escaping Leonore’s firm grip and radiant smile. She practically dragged me back to the common room, where I was forced to spend the rest of a very uneasy study session.

But maybe because of my friends’ assertiveness, I got used to sensing everyone’s mana in only three days.

You Shiina

You Shiina



His hairstyle was changed. To make him look more serious, we went from a center part to bangs.

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Much like Matthias, his hairstyle was changed. He looked too much like Justus before, so we added a part and lengthened his hair to his nape to emphasize his womanizing nature—at the author's request, of course.

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Aurelia

- About 18 years old
- From Ahrensbach
- Married to Lamprecht
- Hair: Blonde
- Eyes: Dark green
- Born in spring
- Green ring

Just short of
170 centimeters
tall



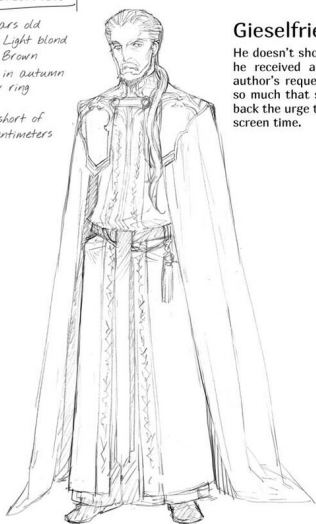
Aurelia

Her veil was made completely opaque. Her face hasn't been revealed in the main volumes, so this is the sole place you'll see it! (For now?) Kazuki-sensei loved the design and rejoiced over how cute it was for Aurelia to have sharp eyes but look so pensive.

Gieselfried

- 58 years old
- Hair: Light blond
- Eyes: Brown
- Born in autumn
- Yellow ring

Just short of
180 centimeters
tall



Gieselfried

He doesn't show up much, but he received a design at the author's request. She loved it so much that she had to fight back the urge to give him more screen time.

Hildebrand

- Third prince
- Anastasius's half-brother
- About 7 years old
- Hair: Blush silver
- Eyes: Bright purple
- Born in autumn
- Yellow ring

About 120
centimeters tall



Hildebrand

He turned out exactly how Kazuki-sensei always imagined. "He's a well-mannered child, and this captures his sincerity well."



Freida
13 years old
About 140
centimeters tall



Charlotte
10 years old
About 135 centimeters tall
Royal Academy uniform

Freida and Charlotte

Freida's design here shows her at thirteen years of age. Though she has the same hairstyle as before, she looks more mature. She makes for a cute combo with Charlotte.

Raimund
12 years old
Adrensbach apprentice
metschalar
Third-year
Hair: Black
Eyes: Blue
140(?) centimeters
tall
??? ring



A cape would
get in his way,
so he uses a
scarf

Raimund

According to Kazuki-sensei, this design fit her description of "some research-obsessed weirdo who would join the mad scientists."

Arthur
22 years old
Sovereign archattendant
Hair: Chestnut
Eyes: Black
175(?) centimeters tall



Simple
clothes
designed
for
brewing

Arthur

A proper, very serious noble. It's interesting to compare his clothes to those worn by adult attendants in Ehrenfest.

Part 4 Volume 6

Tea party outfit



Rozemyne (Tea Party Outfit)

To match Schwartz's and Weiss's new clothes, scarves and detailed embroidery were added to this primarily black outfit.



Raublut

- 42 years old
- From Glessenmeyer
- Sovereign Knight commander
- Hair: Brown
- Eyes: Reddish brown
- Born in winter
- Red ring
- Just short of 190 centimeters tall
- Black cape?
- Brown?

Raublut

He has a light scar on his cheek, a stern look in his eyes, and a large build. In short: he's intimidating. Though it isn't shown here, his cape is black.



Immanuel

- 40 years old
- Sovereign High Priest
- Hair: Fairly dark red
- Eyes: Gray
- About 175 centimeters tall

Immanuel

In regard to new characters, Part 4 Volume 7 sure was heavy on older men. Shiina-sensei captured each of their particulars nicely with her varied designs, as seen here with Immanuel, the religious fanatic.



Schwartz



Weiss



Schwartz and Weiss

Their clothes are embroidered with floral and plant-inspired patterns. The complex patterns on Schwartz's vest in particular are something that only Shiina-sensei could manage to capture.

Heisschitze

- 25 years old
- Dunkelfelder archknight
- Hair: Scorched brown
- Eyes: Red
- Born in summer
- Blue ring
- About 180 centimeters tall
- Catchphrase: "Let's play ditter"

Does he have a cape?



Heisschitze

Kazuki-sensei approved the design with a simple remark: "He looks like a pain in the neck—like the kind of person you'd really want to leave you alone." He wears a cape, though it isn't featured in his sketch.



Hartmut and Cornelius (Formal Attire)

Because the color art for Part 4 Volume 7 depicted the graduation ceremony's sword dance, these two needed some new clothes. The length of their sleeves was changed before the designs were finalized. You can really feel the energy of their completed outfits.

Part 4 Volume 8



- 40 years old
- Matthius's father
- Georgine's apostle
- Hair: Purple
- Eyes: Gold and gray
- Born in winter
- Red ring

Grausam

His face and eyes were exactly as Kazuki-sensei pictured them, but his original design looked too much like Giebe Haldenzel. To fix this, his hair was changed to flow more toward the back.



Adolphine (Formal)

Drawn for Part 4 Volume 7's cover art. Her hair is tied up, and she's wearing a hairpin. Its white roses stand out nicely against her wine-red tresses.

Theodore



- Apprentice medd'n'ght
- 9 years old
- Judith's younger brother
- Hair: Light brown
- Eyes: Violet
- Born in autumn
- Yellow ring

Theodore

Kazuki-sensei was satisfied with his design, in part because he looks so much like Judithhe.

Melchior



- 4-7 years old
- Ehrenfest archduke candidate
- Sylvester's youngest son
- Hair: Blush purple
- Eyes: Blue
- Born in spring
- Green ring

Melchior

Kazuki-sensei wanted "Charlotte if she were a boy" ... and that was exactly what she got. He looks kind and gentle.

Bertilde



- 7-8 years old
- Brunhilde's younger sister
- Count Grosche's daughter (archnoble)
- Hair: Rose pink
- Eyes: Amber
- Born in spring
- Green ring

Bertilde

An excellent design that makes it clear she's Brunhilde's younger sister. Note the artistry of her front braids, which reflects her love of doing hair.

Regisch scales



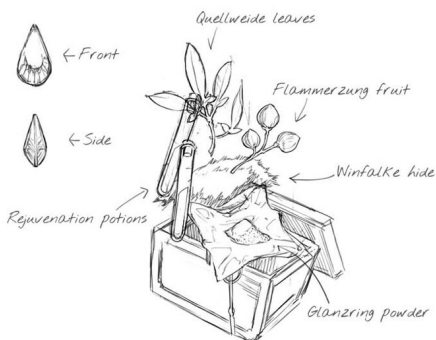
← Front



← Side

Heissshitze's Loot

These items were designed in advance, as they needed to appear in Ferdinand's hidden workshop. You can see them on the cover of Part 4 Volume 8. Kazuki-sensei decided the colors, the box they would sit inside, where the feystones would go, etc. The finished picture shows just how thoroughly she ironed out all the details.



God of Darkness

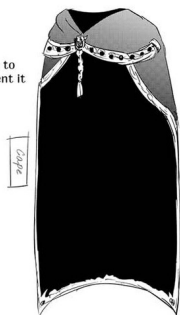


Design Sheets for the Gods Suzuka

- Looks like a handsome loner with a looming shadow
- Black hair, as per his divine color, tied near the bottom (very long)

Large feystone brooch

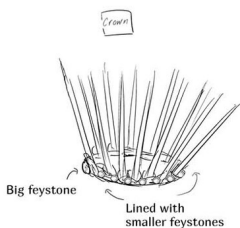
Smaller feystones to complement it



- Bold! Bright! Gorgeous!
- Hair is gold, her divine color
- Covered in feystones and gold ornaments

Goddess of Light

Forehead ornament
not part of her crown



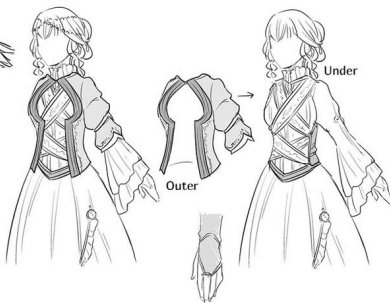
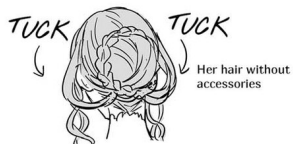
Held in place with delicate gold chains



Goddess of Water Flutrane

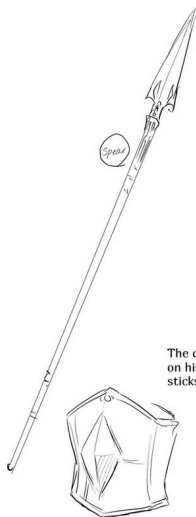


- Design is meant to flow like water
- Soothing aura
- Green hair, as per her divine color



God of Fire Leidenschaft

- Hot-blooded
- Looks like a god of war
- Blue hair, as per his divine color



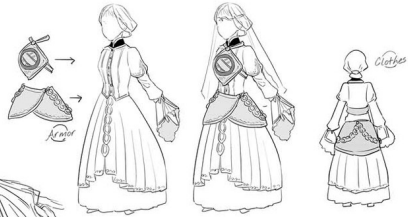
The diamond part
on his breastplate
sticks out



The fur is attached
to his armor

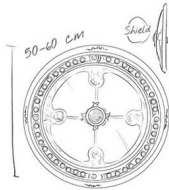
Goddess of Wind Schutzaria

- A sharp-eyed beauty to contrast with the other goddesses
- Since she guards against the God of Life, her clothing visually resembles armor
- Yellow hair to match her divine color



The circle on her chest was given some color in the anime to help it stand out, but it's all the same piece of armor. Only that part is made of a different material.

She wears solid armor over her clothes. The armor is made of mana, so clasps and the like aren't necessary.



Large feystone

Ring of smaller feystones
(half yellow, half clear)



Her hair is loosely tied back
(Shown here without her veil on)
Wears a circular hairpin



Decorated with
smaller feystones

Big feystone

- Stalker god
- His smile is on the scary side
- White hair, as per his divine color

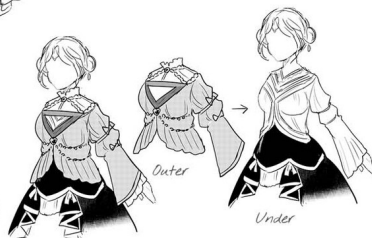
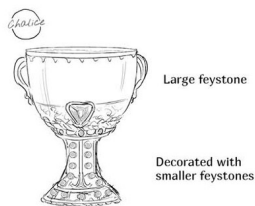
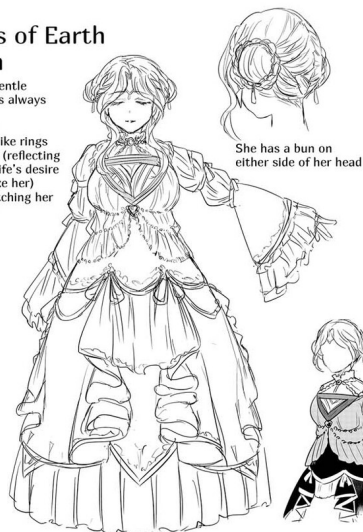
God of Life Ewigeliebe



Plenty of chains, cords,
etc. hanging from him

Goddess of Earth Geduldh

- Plump and gentle with her eyes always lowered
- Has a lot of accessories like rings and earrings (reflecting the God of Life's desire to monopolize her)
- Red hair matching her divine color

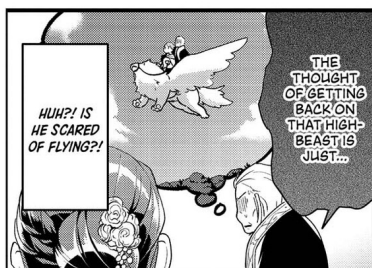
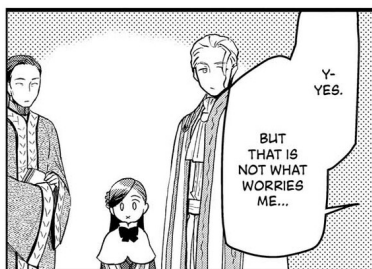


Goddess of Wisdom Mestionora

- Dark-blue hair reminiscent of the night sky
- Golden eyes
- Her age is concealed so she won't be seen as a potential marriage candidate, which is why her skirt goes only as far as her knees

Floral ornaments





Extra

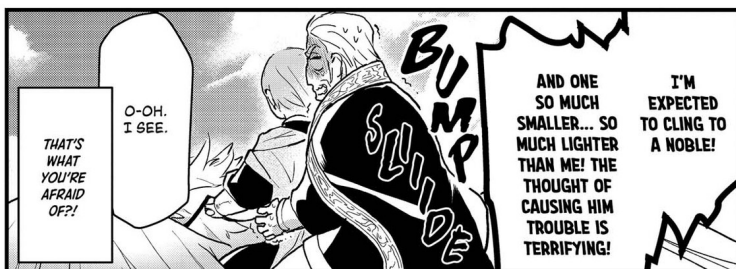
Fanbook 4 Original Manga

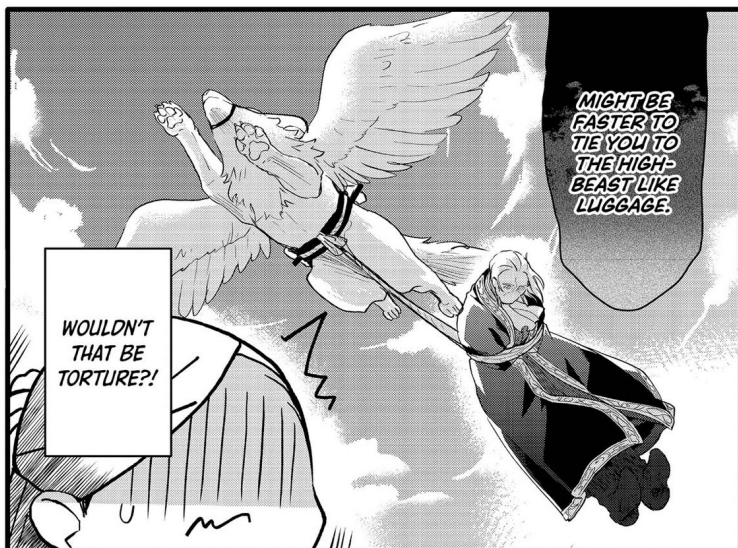
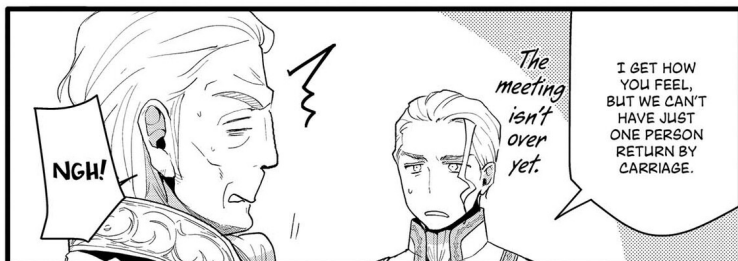
Business Trips Are Tough

Drawn by Ryo Namino

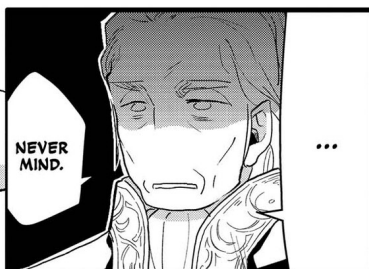
ROZEMYNE UNLOCKED
THE HASSE MONASTERY!







IF ONLY
ROZEMYNE
HAD LESSY
BACK THEN...



Drama CD 3 Post-Recording Report

By Miya Kazuki

In the year 2019, on an unspecified day, I went to the post-recording session of the third drama CD. My first course of action was to meet Suzuka-san and the casting director, whereupon we headed to the studio. We were partway there when I found out Namino-san and the scriptwriter wouldn't be attending. It was a great shame; I'd really hoped to have *two* post-session manga. Sadness.

Once at the studio, there was the usual exchange of greetings and passing around of business cards. It was mostly for Suzuka-san; I'd attended the post-recording for the anime, so I already knew most of the staff. I went in feeling confident—and then noticed the cover art for Part 1 Volume 5 of the manga on Suzuka-san's business card!

"What's that?" I asked. "I don't have one of those."

"Hm? Do you want one?" Suzuka-san replied. "Maybe you should wait. I'm getting new ones made with the artwork from Part 2."

"Can I get one of each? I mean, they're just too cute."

Once everyone had traded their business cards and received copies of the script, they started discussing the presentations and group photos. I waited to one side with Suzuka-san while the staff were busily moving around.

"I never thought we'd get a cast like this. There are so many huge names."

"Right? And this CD covers the Royal Academy. I'm looking forward to hearing how the retainers sound."

This drama CD started with Rozemyne's return to the dormitory in her second year at the Academy and focused on Roderick's name-swearing. I was so excited to hear the retainers' voices. Morohoshi Sumire, the actress playing Leonore and Hannelore, was going to do her recording later, as were the actors playing the guardian trio. Everyone involved was so very busy.

"Kazuki-san, you're most interested in the guardian trio, right?"

"Agewise, the actors are just perfect. I'm impressed we managed to get them all together. The casting director is something else."

Hayami Shou as Ferdinand, Inoue Kazuhiko as Sylvester, and Morikawa Toshiyuki as Karstedt... The director had warned us that at least one of them probably wouldn't be able to make it this year and that we were unlikely to see them all together at once.

"Kazuki-san, could you greet the voice actors once they all

arrive?"

"I can—but I think Rozemyne's actress, Iguchi Yuka, might be tired of greeting me by now."

The director had explained the greetings in advance, so I didn't anticipate any issues. My only concern was that, as a crucial character in the anime, Iguchi Yuka had already attended two test sessions. I'd seen her for both, and the thought of greeting her a third time seemed a little embarrassing.

"You don't need to worry about that," our director assured us. "There are more than enough new faces to warrant another greeting. Oh, and Suzuka-san—you should join her."

"Wait, I'm greeting them too?! Nobody told me! I'm barely even involved with Part 4!"

"You're drawing a post-recording manga, aren't you? Of course you need to take part. Just let them know what you're up to."

"I'll introduce you," I said. "Then you can just add, 'Nice to meet you.'"

"That doesn't mean I won't be nervous!"

We were then informed that everyone had arrived. Suzuka-san was holding her stomach out of stress, grunting and groaning as we headed to the booth where the voice actors were waiting.

"I am Miya Kazuki, the original author," I announced. "Those of you who attended the anime recordings must have heard me say that several times now, but I thought I should repeat it again for the new people here. This drama CD takes place midway through Part 4, so it might take you a little while to get used to the characters, and there are bound to be some words that are hard to pronounce. I thank you all in advance for your hard work."

"I'm Suzuka, the mangaka for Parts 1 and 2. I plan to turn my experiences here today into a manga, but I'm mostly here as a fan."

After the brief greetings, we returned to the control room. Not for long, though, as we were called back into the booth to answer some questions. No surprise there, right? *Bookworm* has some unusual terms—highbeasts, feystones, divine colors, and the like. Then there are the really long names and complex emotional states that need to be incorporated into the dialogue. It made sense that the recording staff couldn't answer in my stead.

"I am here as requested. Now taking questions."

As I recall, Endou Hiroyuki—the voice actor for Roderick—had the most questions. That came as no surprise; Roderick was basically the main character this time around, so he had plenty of dialogue! Part 4 Volume 6 hadn't even been published when we were recording the CD, so Endou Hiroyuki had gone to the trouble of reading the web novel instead.

“The script says ‘Lord Matthias,’ but it was just ‘Matthias’ in the source material...”

“Keen eye, but the script is correct. ‘Lord’ was standardized during editing.”

Rozemyne’s voice actress also had a lot of questions. She pointed out some repetitive syntax, so we had that fixed. She also asked how to read certain words with ambiguous pronunciations.

“How do you want me to say this prayer?” she asked. “Should my delivery be firm, since it comes before a battle?”

“You don’t need to shout or anything. It’s a prayer to the gods, after all. Oh, but I *do* want the weapon prayer and the healing ritual to stand out from each other.”

Truth be told, it was cute how Iguchi-san repeated names under her breath like a chant as she practiced. Maybe it was my fault she had to resort to such measures; I mean, I was the one who gave everyone such long names. (Haha.)

The voice actor for Cornelius asked why his character addresses Rozemyne both with and without “Lady.” I see it as a way of separating his work voice from his private one, and sometimes he slips up when he gets emotional, but none of that was written in the script.

“Also, this part here—is there a grave reason Cornelius is hiding his relationship with his escort from Rozemyne? Depending on the circumstances, I might need to add more weight to my voice...”

“No, not at all. He just doesn’t want his mother using him as fodder for her love stories. There’s no need to make it too serious.”

The actor for Wilfried also generously voiced another former Veronica faction noble for us. That came with its own questions.

“Is this noble male or female? I would also like to know their age, if possible.”

“Umm... He was running around with Wilfried, so the former. This scene takes place after their baptism but before they start school, so... somewhere between seven and ten.”

Charlotte’s voice actress asked how to read one of her reports.

“Here it says, ‘And then she collapsed.’ How do you want me to read that? Dryly, since it’s a report? Or oozing with concern?”

“A tiny bit emotional. Not very. Just enough to show that she really is concerned.”

One topic many of the actors asked about, including those voicing Hartmut and Damuel, was *ordonnanzes*.

“Here it says *or-DEN-nanz*. But it should say *or-DON-nanz*, right?”

“Hm? I pointed out that error when going over the script, but it doesn’t appear to have been fixed. It should say ‘*ordonnanz*.’ I wonder if my other corrections were missed as well...”

The voice actors’ scripts wrongly said “*ordennanz*,” but the audio

engineer's said "ordonnanz." I can't even begin to imagine how that happened.

Returning to the questions—I think I ended up being useful. Well, some of my answers were a tad useless, but that's what the age-old technique of "I trust your judgment" is for! Based on the skill of the voice actors I'd seen for prior recordings, I knew they'd manage just fine.

Question time ended, and the recording began. The prologue was primarily dialogue from the guardians, which wouldn't be recorded until much later, so we skipped to the first chapter. There was a brisk test run, and we made sure the script and character voices were in good order, much like during the previous recordings.

However, *unlike* the previous recordings, the scriptwriter was absent—the same scriptwriter who tirelessly determined whether each character's voice matched their age.

Oh nooo! Who's going to decide in her place? Me?! Is it me?!

"Kazuki-san, is Rozemyne acceptable? She sounds fine to me."

"Yes. Her voice sounds older and more refined than when she was playing Myne in her commoner days for the anime."

As mentioned, Iguchi Yuka was playing Rozemyne. Her performance as Plachta in *Atelier's* Mysterious trilogy was striking. She had a real talent for making minor distinctions in her characters.

"How about Cornelius?"

Yamashita Seiichirou—during the previous recording session, a female voice actress played Cornelius. I requested a male actor from this CD onward, though, as Cornelius's voice would naturally have changed due to puberty.

"I can already imagine how the Cornelius fangirls are going to react."

"Er, Kazuki-san... Is that a yes or no?"

"I mean his voice has matured, exactly as I asked..."

"Okay... I'll interpret that as a yes, then."

Terasaki Yuka played the roles of both Wilfried and Judithe. Her voice was as energetic as expected. No problems there.

"Terasaki-san is playing Wilfried, right? I can't believe it. Especially when Judithe's voice was so cute..."

"Seriously. I wonder what goes on with voice actors' vocal cords."

Then there was Endou Hiroyuki, who was playing Roderick. His voice was especially important, given his significant role in the drama CD. He did a fine job.

"Roderick's timidity and weak social status seep through his every word... I approve, but what do you think, Suzuka-san? Does it suit his age?"

"He sounds like a side noble who's about to be lost in the crowd,

which is very appropriate for Roderick. I think it's fine."

Suzuka-san imagined Roderick floundering while being crushed in a massive crowd of nobles and giggled. Her unique choice of words aside, the voice really did suit him.

Our voice actress for Philine was Iwami Manaka. The voice she gave the character was so adorable that I nearly leapt out of my seat and shouted, "Cute!"

"Philine is suitably charming. Approved."

"Super cute, but doesn't it make her too much like our sweet, gentle Hannelore? And then there's Leonore, who has more of an edge to her."

"True. Hannelore is cute, while Leonore acts more like a secretary."

The voice actress playing both girls was due to record at a later time. I was very much looking forward to hearing her.

From there, the voice checking continued. There were a lot of characters to consider this time around.

Umehara Yuuichirou was our Damuel. He sounded a lot like a knight, at least from what I could tell. His lines were all shouted, so it was hard to know whether his normal voice fit the bill. I decided to let it slide for now.

Matthias showed up a bit later in the story. Umehara-san plays him as well. It said on the sheet that Damuel was his main role while Matthias was a side one, but I'm pretty certain Matthias had more lines. Damuel wasn't at the Royal Academy, so he only showed up in flashbacks.

"Wow, Matthias is so... Matthias!"

Umehara-san did such an excellent job with Matthias that Suzuka-san's vocabulary went right out the window. (Haha.) It was so kind and gentle but still carried the strong spirit of a knight. I expect Matthias fans will roll around on their beds in glee when they hear him speak. Look forward to it.

Then there was Miyazawa Kiyoko, who plays Rihyarda. She used to teach Japanese before she retired as an instructor, went to a school for voice actors, and then debuted as a voice actress. I remembered thinking she had a voice well suited for explaining things and giving lectures, so it was a real "Aha!" moment when I found out about her past. Anyway, I really admire her can-do attitude and dedication to her passions. There's so much I could learn from her.

"Mm... Rihyarda's previous voice was exceptionally soft, but this one feels a bit sterner..."

"Considering her role as an instructor, sterner sounds better. Any thoughts, Kazuki-san?"

"Yes, this is good. It feels more Namino-Rihyarda than Shiina-

Rihyarda.”

“Yeah! It totally does!”

Rihyarda received our approval, then it was on to Brunhilde. Iwami Manaka provided her voice, making it her second role in this drama CD.

“This feels more like Leonore than Brunhilde, don’t you think?”

“It’s a bit rough.”

“They’re both dignified young noblewomen, but Brunhilde is an attendant, so I would rather she speak a little more softly.”

And just like that, Brunhilde’s proud, distinguished voice softened like butter in a hot pan. Excellent work, Iwami-san.

Next was Hartmut. In many ways, he was the most anticipated—and troublesome—character in the recording. He caused me a lot of strife in the bonus short story. Voicing him was Uchida Yuuma.

“Hmm... Can we make him a little more over the top? He *sounds* like Hartmut, but there isn’t that... off-puttingness.”

“Yeah, he’s too calm for Hartmut.”

He needed to exude drunken fervor or at least seem more like a cultist. I couldn’t think of a polite way to put it, but the sound engineer rephrased it for me and conveyed only the important parts to Uchida-san.

“Wow! Hartmut sounds like Hartmut now.”

“Amazing! I want to throw up!” (Said as praise.)

I wanted this Hartmut to preach about Rozemyne, but I didn’t want to listen to him. It was a great combination. Perfect, even.

Nobody had any qualms about Terasaki Yuka’s portrayal of Wilfried. To be honest, I was completely focused on how she made him sound so distinct from Judithe.

“No problems with Wilfried. Can’t even make jokes about it.”

“Same goes for Charlotte.”

Hondo Kaede played Charlotte perfectly. Her strong spirit came through in her cute voice, and she exuded the sharp air of an archduke candidate. The cuteness even stood out compared to Philine’s. There wasn’t a single thing I wanted to change.

Once we’d ironed out all the voices, we moved on to correcting the script. Certain dialogue was based on a monologue from the web novel, so lower-city speech sometimes slipped into noble dialogue and some of the honorifics were missing. You know, the kind of things you don’t normally notice until you reread your work. The sound engineer wrote it all down, went to the booth, and distributed corrections.

From there, the second round of testing began. One person had gotten used to pronouncing “Traugott” as “Tragoutt” and really struggled to fix it. “Bonifatius” was another tough name, as nearly everyone stumbled over it. Then there were those of the former

Veronica faction... Once again, I was reminded that the language in *Ascendance of a Bookworm* could be pretty rough.

Iguchi-san made cute little grunts every time she made a mistake, which was so much like Rozemyne. I couldn't believe how cute it was. Sorry.

I pointed out whenever something was improperly enunciated, but the sound engineers were the true heroes. They had an accent dictionary on hand, and anytime a word sounded even slightly incorrect, they immediately looked it up to be safe. They had plenty of experience and moved impressively fast. True veterans.

We finished the main takes, then rerecorded any sections with accidental overlapping dialogue or unwanted noise in the background. Most lines were isolated and repeated out of context, but that didn't faze our talented voice actors—they delivered them with just as much emotion as before!

No sooner had we come to the end of the first chapter than we started on the second. New characters meant more voice testing.

Hondo Kaede and Iwami Manaka voiced Schwartz and Weiss, respectively. Another instance of voice actors doubling up on roles—or tripling up in Iwami-san's case. Again, no problems to report.

“A doubly cute performance. Makes you want to pat Schwartz and Weiss to infinity...”

Solange's voice came from Miyazawa Kiyoko, the actress for Rihyarda. She spoke softly and sweetly to contrast the head attendant's harsher tone, and the end result was two characters who didn't sound at all alike. Voice actresses really do have amazing range!

“Solange sounds fine. How about Rauffen?”

Rauffen was done by Yamashita Seiichirou—who also voiced Cornelius, in case you'd forgotten. He made the two characters so distinct that, without the casting sheet, I never would have guessed he played them both!

“The voice sounds a little too harsh. Can we make it younger and a bit brighter?”

“I thought it was perfect. Is he not supposed to be harsh? I thought Rauffen was a stern character.”

Both the producer and director found my input surprising. Rauffen certainly was a hot-blooded, overbearing teacher, but I wanted more youthful vibes. Like Shuuzou Matsuoka! The test voice better suited Aub Dunkelfelger, so I asked that it be changed. Good.

“How about Roderick's father? Does he sound the right age?”

“He does to me. The most important thing is switching his manner of speaking after the Ivory Tower incident.”

Takeuchi Sou provided the voice for Roderick's father. The character only appeared in flashbacks, but he played a crucial role in

making Roderick more sympathetic. In the aftermath of the Ivory Tower incident, he goes from speaking normally with his son to taking a much more violent tone.

“Oh, it’s plain ol’ Damuel.”

“Kazuki-san! Phrasing! Haha.”

Damuel’s normal voice was soft and caring—that of a layknight somewhat used to serving the archducal family. No wonder his kind words made Philine’s heart throb. Though his character seemed a lot like Matthias on paper, Umehara-san couldn’t have made their voices more distinct. They both sounded so cool.

Once the voices were done, we moved on to corrections.

“Didn’t the odd ‘Hannelore’ sound more like ‘Hennelore’?”

“On page X, please change Rozemyne’s line from ‘High Priest’ to ‘Ferdinand.’”

“That child of the former Veronica faction sounded too much like Wilfried. Please use a different voice.”

“On page Y, change Roderick’s line from ‘I’m fine anytime’ to ‘I am fine whenever.’ Also, change ‘Dad’ to ‘Father.’”

“Roderick’s emotions need to gradually intensify. If you start too strong, you won’t be able to ramp them up.”

I wasn’t the only one making corrections; the director and producer provided some as well. The sound engineer checked everything before moving to the booth and conveying our thoughts to the voice actors.

The tests concluded, and we moved on to the actual recording. We completed the first wave, then carried out the same checks as during the first chapter. Things were going smoothly.

At one point in the second chapter, there was a conversation between Hartmut and Cornelius. It was nice to have dialogue between two close friends, especially when they’ve known each other for such a long time. My heart throbbed more over Cornelius in lover mode than knight mode. I think some people will fall in love with him just from his voice. Even I stopped to wonder, like, when did Cornelius get this cool...? Yamashita’s voice wizardry is amazing.

Uchida’s Hartmut was very... *Hartmut*.

“Wow, he’s making my face scrunch in a whirlpool of disgust!”
(Said as praise.)

“I can practically see him staring down Rozemyne with a cultish grin!” (Also said as praise.)

Believe it or not, those were compliments of the highest order. Hartmut’s fans loved his sickening attitude, and they’d probably complain if we gave them anything less. He *needed* to be off-putting.

I was a little worried about how Endou-san, an adult, would portray Roderick at eight years old during the flashbacks. But he

managed an especially cute voice, which made Takeuchi-san's brutal father voice seem all the more unreasonable.

"Sensei, any comments?"

"Hmm... It says here that 'the retainers cry out in surprise.'

Rihyarda, Philine, and Judithe are the only ones present, so make sure not to include any male voices."

The director and producer searched the script for any other mentions of retainers that might need to be clarified. Meanwhile, the sound engineer asked whether there was anything else I wanted to mention.

"Oh, sure. Let's see... This is a surprisingly big one."

I thumbed through the script, then pointed dramatically at a section I'd marked.

"Page X! During his conversation with Hartmut, Cornelius isn't recoiling in horror enough. I want him at least as repulsed as he was during our voice tests."

"Got it. I'll ask him to use that tone again."

It was essential that listeners experience Cornelius at his coolest *and* at his most disgusted. Look forward to it. (Haha.)

"Good work, everyone. Break time."

Once the second chapter was over and done with, we held a fifteen-minute break at the sound engineer's instruction. The voice actors used this time to eat snacks, use the bathroom, head to their next studio, sign paperwork, and so on.

As I munched on snacks in the control room, Suzuka-san took out a clear folder. "Kazuki-sensei, could you look these over?" she asked.

"Ah! Cover art for the manga!"

I eagerly started reviewing her illustration for Part 2 Volume 1.

"This is excellent. Oh, but wait... Isn't this book from the reading desk? Myne is too weak to hold something like that."

"Aah... But if we put the book on the desk, the title box would cover Myne's face."

"That's no good."

As much as we wanted realism, we couldn't obscure the protagonist's face. Repeat after me: the cover art is a representation, not reality!

Our break came to an end, meaning it was time to test the voices for the third chapter.

"How's Traugott?"

"He sounds great. You can really tell that he's lost his confidence."

Uchida Yuuma voiced Traugott. You'd never guess that he also plays Hartmut. How can one actor portray both Traugott mumbling through a broken nose and an ecstatic Hartmut extolling the virtues of his saint? It's unbelievable.

Okai Katsunori played a generic apprentice knight who showed up during a feybeast hunt. Pretty much everyone has made an appearance by the third chapter, so there aren't too many new characters to mention.

"Umm, I think you're mispronouncing this word. Repeat after me."

"On page Y, please change 'Where are you going?' to 'Might I ask where you are going?'"

After various tests, we started another main recording session. Endou-san couldn't quite nail the accent when saying "for my heart's desire," so we made that his assignment. He would rerecord it later.

Once we'd completed the third chapter, the guardian trio arrived. It was almost closing time, and several actors needed to go to their next studio, so we went straight to taking a group photo. The big-name trio exchanged words with the other voice actors while the staff set up chairs and such in the booth. I watched from the control room so as not to interfere.

"You won't be joining the photo, Kazuki-san?"

"I keep my appearance private, so no."

The photo had everyone except Hannelore's voice actress. You could say her timing was as poor as her character's. (Haha.)

From there, the staff quickly debated whether to start the epilogue or the trio's scene next.

"There are several actors pressed for time, so I say the epilogue."

"Perhaps, but the veterans are busy too. We should start with them."

The sound engineer made the final decision. Time spent debating was time wasted, so they started chronologically with the guardian trio's scenes in the prologue. Hayami Shou was our Ferdinand.

"I was there when he recorded for the anime, so there shouldn't be any issues."

"If he yelled at me with that voice, I would cry. Rozemyne must have nerves of steel to simply brush it off."

Suzuka-san's remark made me laugh, but she was right—it was a deep voice that could make your legs weak with fear. Ferdinand doesn't have much of a presence at the start of the anime, so it's impressive that he made such an impact with so few lines.

Inoue Kazuhiko gave Sylvester an overwhelmingly authoritative voice. Because the character was an archduke, perhaps.

"Should Sylvester sound a little younger?"

"Less young and more... flashy."

"Sylvester's the archduke, but he doesn't ooze that much authority. Ask for the target age to be lowered a bit."

Morikawa Toshiyuki played Karstedt. I'd only ever heard him speak in a kind voice, so I was curious to see what he'd come up with.

Lo and behold, he was a dead ringer for the role.

“Wow! He sounds so much like a knight commander! So amazing! So strong! So cool!”

“Fits well with the other two. And on that note—is it just me, or does this trio have, like, an overwhelming aura? An incredible presence? Do you think Iguchi-san’s going to be alright performing with them?”

“They might have an aura, but it’s *Rozemyne* who drags *them* around. Funny to imagine, right?”

Okai Katsunori took on the role of the attendant delivering three wooden boards to the guardian trio, who read them with their heads in their hands.

“Remember they need to use their public personas during the scenes outside and their private ones when they’re alone in the office. And, um... when they’re alone, act like old friends. Or like people who are pretty close.”

Despite my not-so-great instructions, the voice actors gave me exactly what I wanted. All in a day’s work for a trio of veterans!

Yet when it came to *Bookworm*’s long names, even our professionals found themselves up against the wall. They let out a little “Aah...” every time they misspoke. And then there was the tricky vocabulary. Someone overheard one of the guardians say, “Sagacious... Sagaci... Okay, isn’t this word a little too advanced?” (Haha.)

That said, after the testing and only a brief primer on kanji readings and accents, they captured the emotions and intentions of their lines with only a few small pointers. The recording finished in the blink of an eye—a mere thirty minutes after they’d all met up. Fast, right? And when they were done, they went straight to their next workplaces. Thank you for taking some time out of your busy schedules.

The veterans passed through like a storm, and it came time to work on the epilogue. Roderick was our man of the hour during the name-swearing scene, so we had to make sure Hartmut didn’t outshine him. It was something I paid careful attention to when writing—one wrong move and our favorite cultist would charge to the forefront. Things went smoothly in the end, though. Maybe because of my warning.

Once the epilogue was done, everyone hurried out of the studio like a rush of water.

The background noise came next. Because a surprising number of our actors returned to the studio, we already had some audio of retainers greeting each other and chatting. The volume would naturally be lowered for the CD. I didn’t really follow at first, but as it

turns out, if you layer two or three of the recordings on top of each other, it sounds like a bunch more people are there. Techniques like that are something else.

“Aaand done. Good work.”

It was then that Endou-san, voicing Roderick, timidly raised a hand. “Um, what about my assignment...? The part I was meant to rerecord.”

“Oh, right! I completely forgot about that!”

Mr. Engineeeeer! (Haha.)

The director and producer began skimming their scripts to make sure they hadn’t forgotten anything else. Roderick’s homework was swiftly completed, and with that, we were done.

But then *Takeuchi-san* raised a hand.

“Will we not be recording the *ternisbefallen*’s cries?”

“And the *zantze*...”

Right. He was playing the *ternisbefallen*, while Endou-san was the *zantze*. I remembered my surprise when I saw the casting sheet.

“Voice actors can roar?” I pondered ponderously.

“Hmm... Sensei, what kind of vibe do *ternisbefallens* and *zantzes* have?”

“*Ternisbefallens* are like dogs or wolves, right?” Suzuka-san asked. “And *zantzes* are like cats?”

“That’s right,” I said. “*Ternisbefallens* are wolflike feybeasts two or three times as large as a person. *Zantzes* are catlike feybeasts only about knee-high.”

The sound engineer fell into thought. “We can leave those to the sound effects team. Good work, everyone.”

“Okay. Good work, everyone.”

Endou-san and Takeuchi-san played it cool, but I was screaming “NOOO!” on the inside. I really, *really* wanted to see Takeuchi-san howl. I couldn’t believe it was going to be done with sound effects. So sad...

Anyway, we were discussing which sounds to use when the sound engineer seemed to remember something.

“Oh, sensei—what are *ordonnanzes* like? They must be pretty big for Matthias to be able to ride them.”

Um... Matthias? *Ride them?*

“I mean, like, in terms of sound effects. What kind of SWOOSH would they make?”

He spread out his arms and made a loud SWOOSH to demonstrate, bringing to mind a deadly serious Matthias riding a giant white bird into battle. Though the image made me smirk, it wasn’t accurate in the slightest.

“Oh no, no... You’re thinking of highbeasts. *Ordonnanzes* are little

white birds that receive a voice message and then fly away to deliver it. You could hold one in the palm of your hand.”

“Whew! Good thing I asked. I was about to give the ordonnanzes a SWOOSH.”

“Yeah. I was totally in Team SWOOSH until you cleared that up.”

As it turned out, the sound effects guy had made the same mistake. He spread out his arms and swooshed in solidarity.

Suzuka-san and I burst into laughter as we both imagined nobles riding massive ordonnanzes. Try to picture Bonifatius crashing one into Ferdinand’s room and shouting, “HOW IS ROZEMYNE DOING?!” several times a day. It’s hilarious.

“Oh, sensei. Does SWOOSH work for highbeasts?”

“You may SWOOSH.”

The sound effects need attention too.

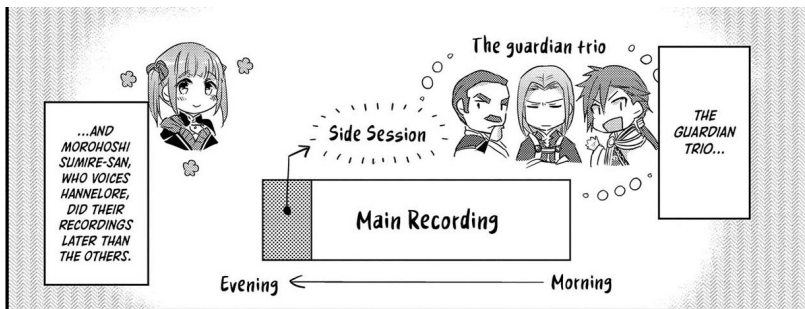
All in all, recording the third drama CD was as fun as ever.



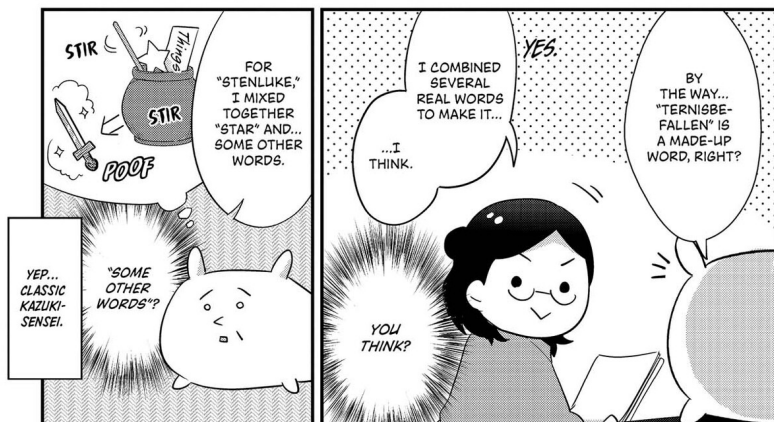
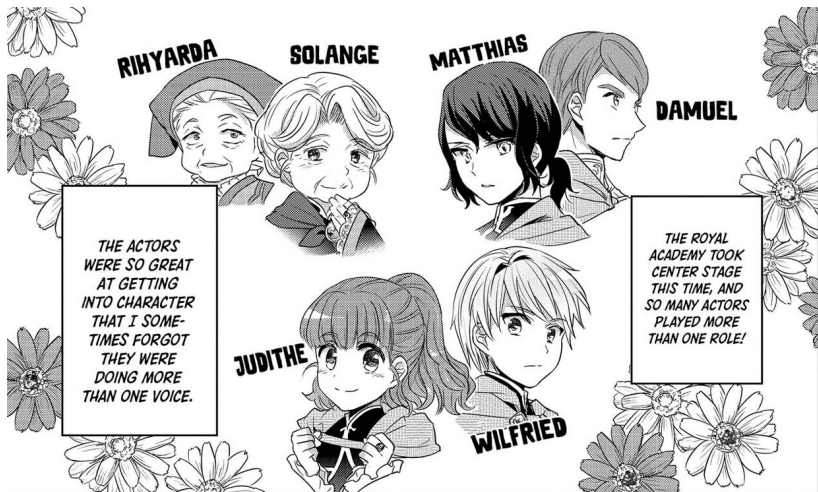
Rozemyne: Iguchi Yuka
Ferdinand: Hayami Shou
Sylvester: Inoue Kazuhiko
Karstedt: Morikawa Toshiyuki
Wilfried/Judith: Terasaki Yuka
Charlotte/Schwartz: Hondo Kaede
Cornelius/Rauffen: Yamashita Seiichirou
Hartmut/Traugott: Uchida Yuuma
Damuel/Matthias: Umehara Yuuichirou
Hannelore/Leonore: Morohoshi Sumire
Philine/Brunhilde/Weiss: Iwami Manaka
Rihyarda/Solange: Miyazawa Kiyoko
Roderick/Ignaz: Endou Hiroyuki

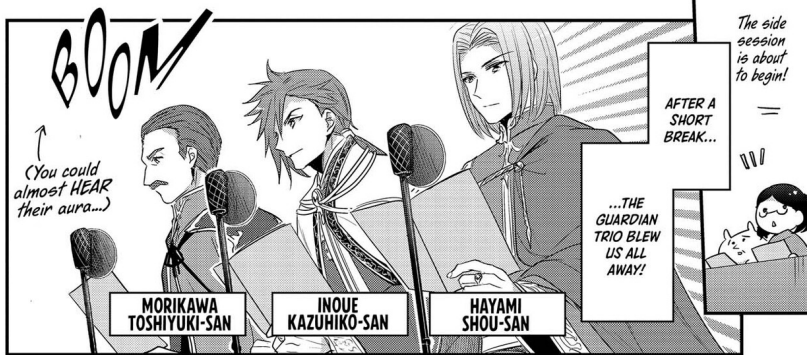
(Honorifics excluded)





Me, watching through the window





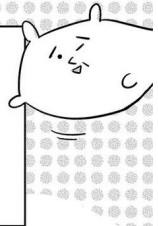


Lively
Hartmut

He's so uniquely
off-putting
(in a good way)

LEAN

AND NOW
FOR THE
USUAL
SUMMARY
CORNER!



Headache-Inducing Reports



Even these three strong men...

VS THE TERNISBEFALLEN!
TENSION!



Cornelius
so cool...

I reeally love
Leonore and
Cornelius!

Like a work
call. Cute!

ORDONNAN

This is
Matthias.



INSANELY
ADORABLE



Roderick's
resolve
touched
my heart.

A main
player
this
time...



PLEASE
ENJOY
THE EVER-
EXPANDING
WORLD OF
BOOKWORM!



THE ANIME,
DRAMA CDS,
AND MORE...
THERE'S A
LOT GOING ON
THIS YEAR!

End

Q&A with Miya Kazuki

Here are my responses to questions taken between July 15 and July 22, 2019. I wrote these while working on Part 4 Volume 9, which made things a little confusing for me. It was hard to tell what might constitute a spoiler.

Miya Kazuki

Q: Where was Myne taken when she collapsed during her baptism ceremony?

A: She was taken to an empty room for laynobles in the temple's noble section. If you have the map included in Part 2 of the manga adaptation, it was the second room from the left along the southernmost wall.

Q: It sounds like Myne learns Ferdinand's name for the first time at the end of Part 2 Volume 1. Is that really the case? Do his attendants address him exclusively as "High Priest"?

A: Yes and yes. They called him by his name before he took the role but switched to "High Priest" afterward. In the same vein, Bezewanst was only ever called "High Bishop" in the temple, which was why it took Myne so long to learn his name. Only blue priests without important roles use their names, such as Brother Egmont.

Q: Ferdinand's name was embroidered on the handkerchief he lent Myne in Part 2 Volume 1. Did he embroider it himself? If not, who did it for him?

A: In the temple, clothes and accessories need to be embroidered with names and/or crests so they don't get mixed up in the laundry. Ferdinand commissioned a seamstress to embroider his.

Q: In Part 2 Volume 2, Ferdinand gets Myne to learn the harspiel as part of her noble education. She doesn't comment on the sheet music. Is it written the same as ours?

A: It isn't, but that might not surprise you when Yurgenschmidt's language and culture are so distinct. It's also worth noting how much musical notation systems vary even within our own world. Compare the sheet music for the piano to that of some Japanese instruments, for example. Myne doesn't remark on it because she has a limited interest in sheet music to begin with and isn't at all surprised when she finds some she doesn't understand. If she came across a book that she couldn't read, however, she might have had a lot more to say

about it.

Q: During the trombe hunt in Part 2 Volume 2, Myne spots a winged rabbit among the knights' mounts. I assume it belonged to a female knight who loved shumils, but Myne made no mention of the rider's sex. Is that because she couldn't distinguish the men from the women? Does everyone's armor need to look the same?

A: It's much easier to spot a woman clad in armor when she has a large chest. The design is uniform because that's how students are taught to make it when they attend the Royal Academy.

Q: Back in Part 3 Volume 1, what drove Ferdinand to mingle during the Starbind Ceremony? I thought priests couldn't get married.

A: Ferdinand wanted to know what others thought about Veronica being deposed and Sylvester adopting Rozemyne. He also aimed to draw the ire of the former Veronica faction's nobles so they wouldn't bad-mouth Sylvester or Rozemyne. To that end, he strutted around the ceremony like he owned the place, despite having been ostracized under Veronica's rule.

Q: There's a point in the story where Rozemyne says she needs to "relearn" self-restraint, but she never seemed to show any as Myne or Urano. Has there ever been a time when she's had discipline?

A: From an outside perspective, it might seem like she charges from one rampage to another, but she holds back in her own way. Then, in Part 3 Volume 1, she abandons her self-restraint in her quest for revenge against Ferdinand.

Q: For her debut, Rozemyne played a song dedicated to Leidenschaft the God of Fire. How did the song come to be associated with him in the first place? Did someone ask Myne what it was about? If so, how did she reply?

A: Yes, Myne was asked to describe the song. She said, "It's about fighting and growing stronger. Like, um... coming out victorious, no matter what. Aiming to be the very best. You know, hot-blooded things like that." So it came to be associated with the God of Fire.

Q: Rozemyne praised Ferdinand so much when their cleansing of the lower city went according to plan, but nobody else reacted that much. Were they stunned silent? Were they in work mode? Or were they simply used to what they saw? I was wondering how much it clashed with noble "common sense," if at all.

A: They were too stunned to speak. Rozemyne's proposal that they use a waschen on the entire city had already seemed crazy to them, so imagine their surprise when Ferdinand actually pulled it off. It also took place right after the entwickeln, and many of them were still

wondering if all adults who passed the archduke candidate course could manage the same feat. You could say they weren't sure what to believe.

Karstedt had already known what to expect, so he was silent for another reason. He watched the spectacle with a distant look in his eyes, thinking that he had nothing to say and that he should simply let them get on with it.

Q: Who does Rozemyne mistake for Aurelia's mother during Lamprecht's Starbinding? We learn in Aurelia's side story that her mother is already deceased.

A: That was Aurelia's father's first wife.

Q: Tuuli made extra Library Committee armbands before Rozemyne even requested them. Was that because Rozemyne said she planned to give them to her friends?

A: That's right. Tuuli has lots of friends, so she figured a few armbands wouldn't be enough.

Q: Throughout the series, Rozemyne has used analogies to describe all sorts of people. How would she describe Charlotte?

A: That's a good question. In addition to being cute, Charlotte means a lot to Rozemyne and always inspires her to try her hardest. So... like a pretty hair ornament for a formal occasion, maybe? Rozemyne doesn't have too many chances to wear it, but when she does, she strives to be on her best behavior. That's their relationship in a nutshell.

Q: During her first year, Rozemyne was forbidden from entering the library until everyone had passed their classes. Did that rule persist into her second year? It caused a lot of problems when Wilfried introduced it, and the Better Grades Committee made a lot of progress with the students' grades, so I wouldn't imagine it was necessary.

A: No, that particular ban wasn't in place during Rozemyne's second year. The only stipulation was that she needed to pass her own classes. Archduke candidates can't visit the library alone, and even Rozemyne agreed that she would start slacking on her studies without some kind of rule in place.

Q: What would Ferdinand have done if Rozemyne had said she wanted to become the Zent when they were discussing the bible's magic circle in his hidden room?

A: He could have done plenty without even needing to oppose her directly. I suspect she would have climbed the towering stairway by the end of the Dedication Ritual.

Q: During the tea party in Part 4 Volume 7, when Rozemyne was

discussing love stories with Hannelore and Charlotte, who inspired the tale about the apprentice knight who refused to accept defeat?

A: Heisshitze.

Q: On the topic of gazebo trysts, what does it mean for the God of Darkness to spread his cape to envelop the Goddess of Light? Does it mean to embrace someone or get close to them?

A: It can mean many things, depending on the situation and the “maturity” of the listener.

Q: Back during Part 4 Volume 7’s dinner match, Hannelore’s attack against Ferdinand was deemed physical. Does that mean she threw something? Did she use her hands or perhaps a launching tool of some form?

A: Rozemyne couldn’t see it, but Hannelore launched a magic tool at him using a sling like Judithe’s.

Q: Did nobody find it suspicious that Ferdinand’s mana didn’t resist Rozemyne’s when *ternisbefallens* attacked the Interduchy Tournament?

A: Nobody else knew; Ferdinand was the only one who could feel it. People might have questioned Rozemyne’s decision to first cleanse his wounds—they were up against rare feybeasts, and she thought the black sludge needed to be washed away—but nobody found the healing suspicious.

Q: How did those who investigated the Werkestock Dormitory know that its teleportation circle had recently been active? Did they use knowledge from the archduke candidate course? Or was it a matter of them having more mana than whoever used it and tried to cover their tracks?

A: Completing the archduke candidate course was important, but they also needed a keen eye. Anastasius’s group was only able to confirm the circle’s use because of Gundolf’s report. If not for him, they might never have noticed.

Q: How was Old Werkestock’s teleportation circle still usable when the duchy’s foundation was lost? Did those who operated it have authorization feystones from the former Aub Werkestock, or did someone new dye the foundation? Could the circle have been used some other way?

A: The foundation’s whereabouts are still unknown. The Sovereign Knight’s Order determined through their investigation that individuals with authorization feystones operated the circle. It is unclear whether the stones came directly from the aub or whether they were passed down until they ended up in the hands of terrorists.

Q: In terms of complexity, was translating Dunkelfelger's history book into modern language like translating kobun or kanbun into contemporary Japanese?

A: Dunkelfelger is one of the oldest duchies in Yurgenschmidt, so a more appropriate comparison might be translating man'yōgana.

Q: Rozemyne's translation of the history book was well received, but did it clash with the translations written by Dunkelfelger's archducal family?

A: Study the source material—that's the Dunkelfelger way! They were just glad to have an easier version to read.

Q: Are there any correlations between a noble's height and their status or birth duchy? Perhaps due to the food they eat.

A: No, not really—but nobles do tend to be seven or eight centimeters taller than commoners. Gunther and Benno are especially tall for their status, which makes them as tall as the average noble.

Q: Back in Part 2, Myne remarked that the plush toy Tuuli made looked a lot like a white bear. Do white bears actually exist in Yurgenschmidt?

A: That was just Myne's impression. It might have been something else entirely.

Q: Do you need to be a certain age to drink alcohol in Yurgenschmidt?

A: No.

Q: What does Hugo's ex think about him now?

A: Nothing at all. He was but one of many men she dated. She would remember him if you asked, but she swiftly married someone who met her needs and now lives an ordinary life.

Q: Are all of Rozemyne's personnel and the Gutenbergs literate?

A: No, not all of them. Johann and Zack learned only as much as they needed to understand schematics. Heidi cares about the names of the materials she uses and nothing more.

Q: As I understand it, letterpress printers have to set clear standards; they can print only a certain number of characters per line and so many lines per page. Are there procedures in place to help Elvira's writers work within those limitations? Like how Japan has manuscript paper separated into four hundred squares, each for a single character. If not, do they write freely and trust the workshop to arrange the text for them?

A: As of right now, the workshops arrange the text.

Q: Does someone in Effa's family manage the Heuss Workshop? I was shocked when she chose expensive white cloth for the archducal family and even took it home with her! Her boss gave her permission, I imagine, but it must have been worth several times her annual salary. Surely only a relative would allow something like that.

A: People only extend workshop invitations to those they can trust, so yes, a lot of workshops end up being family-run. I should note, however, that it's fairly commonplace for those entrusted with expensive materials to continue their work at home. Nobody batted an eye when Effa and Tuuli took home expensive thread to make Myne's hairpins.

Q: Now that Effa works as a Renaissance, does the Gunther household enjoy a higher standard of living than its neighbors?

A: Enough that, under normal circumstances, they would probably have moved into a new home by now.

Q: Lutz's family owns chickens—we've seen them give their neighbors eggs in exchange for other goods—but does their lack of modern equipment not cause issues? I would imagine there's a smell problem, for one thing. That might have been okay in the past, but would people not complain now that the lower city needs to be kept clean? It must have been hard for Karla to tend to the chickens on her own, so maybe they were moved elsewhere.

A: No, the chickens haven't moved from their attic. The lower city might be cleaner now than it was before, but that doesn't mean we should start judging it by the values of our modern society. There are odors everywhere. Plenty of people raise even worse-smelling livestock, and there are butchers who turn that livestock into meat. As for Karla, while she might be doing the brunt of the work, don't forget that she has Ralph there for assistance. Once he gets married, he or one of his brothers will propose moving back home with their parents.

Q: Do commoners turn into feystones when they die? If not, would the same be true for Myne?

A: Commoners have some mana but not enough for a feystone to form. Myne is an exception; she has lots of mana even by noble standards, so her feystone would be relatively large and packed with condensed mana.

Q: Nobles turn into feystones when they die. Is the same true for commoners? If so, where is Liz's feystone being kept? If not, do they leave corpses?

A: Unless they die in certain ways, such as during combat, nobles don't turn straight into feystones—they leave behind a corpse from which their feystone must be removed. The duty falls to a blue priest,

who carries out the procedure with Ewigeliebe's sword, which can essentially be considered a funeral. Nobles who have passed away do not leave behind feystones otherwise.

Liz was a commoner, so her mana returned to Geduldh's womb.

Q: When a blue priest or child with mana dies in the temple, what happens to their feystone? Does their family claim it, or does it remain in the temple?

A: Their family has first claim to the feystone. Otherwise, it becomes the property of the temple.

Q: Do blue priests ever have children with gray shrine maidens, then secretly take the children as attendants?

A: As unlikely as that sounds, I can't say it's never happened.

Q: Did the blue priests who returned to noble society have debuts? If so, were they held in private, alongside the winter debuts, or not at all? I'm curious whether those who hadn't come of age yet mingled with the other children.

A: They debuted alongside the baptized children in the grand hall. It was necessary for them to carry themselves as nobles, and problems would surely have arisen if they hadn't made their family ties known.

Q: Are blue priests and those who become servants due to lacking mana counted as commoners? What happens during their baptisms, and where are their medals kept?

A: They can be nobles or commoners. Some blue priests and shrine maidens receive income from the Harvest Festival and other such events. They might also get funding from their relatives, in which case they might be baptized prior to entering the temple to reinforce their connections. If, during that baptism, they manage to make the mana-measuring tool shine to a level that suits their house, they're considered nobles. If not, they're deemed commoners. Those who might one day return to noble society are baptized without fail. Others among the blood-related servants never get baptized and don't have medals.

Q: If a laynoble family loses even more mana and produces heirs without any mana at all, do they lose their house and start being treated the same as commoners? What if they can't even raise their manaless heirs in the temple?

A: Those without mana cannot become nobles. They could spend their lives as commoners, but they would probably be unregistered. If most of a noble family's children fail to make the mana-measuring tool shine, then yes, their house will only fall apart in the near future. They might choose to move out of the Noble's Quarter to a province,

have their mana-devoid children baptized as commoners, and then slowly integrate themselves into commoner society. Otherwise, to stay in the Noble's Quarter, they would need to adopt an appropriate successor from a relative. Some refuse to face reality and cling to the Noble's Quarter when they have no place there, dooming their entire house to ruin.

Q: We've seen that people can change their name in secret, like when Myne became Rozemyne, but can they do it without having to take on a whole new identity? If so, how?

A: Are you imagining someone whose parents gave them a joke name? If they haven't been baptized, they won't have any trouble changing their name, as they won't even be registered with their duchy. If they *have* been baptized but haven't yet enrolled at the Royal Academy, they can still change their name with the aub's consent—though they'd end up being refused in the vast majority of cases. Things get a lot harder once they're a student, as by that point, any name changes need permission from the throne. Would the Zent go to such trouble for the sake of one noble? There's a chance, but I wouldn't hold my breath.

Q: Are there records of anyone with the Devouring attending the Royal Academy? Other than Rozemyne, of course.

A: Rozemyne had already been adopted when she enrolled, so there aren't any records of her having the Devouring. Freida would probably have attended the Academy if she had signed an adoption contract with a noble prior to her baptism, but again, there wouldn't have been any records to speak of.

Q: It was mentioned that Margaret, the former orphanage director, made use of a hidden room. That means she had a ring and was baptized as a noble, right?

A: Yes, she had just enough mana to be granted a ring. Her father didn't have the money to raise her as a noble, though, so he sent her to the temple with several goals in mind. If not for the shameful acts she went on to commit, she might have returned to noble society with the other priests and shrine maidens when the civil war ended.

Q: Would an archduke's first wife from another duchy ever be prevented from interacting with their children? I mean, to minimize the influence of her home duchy on them.

A: No, a mother will raise her own children until their baptisms. Veronica disregarded this practice when she took Wilfried away from Florencia.

Q: The terms “nurse” and “wet nurse” appear throughout the

series, much to my confusion. I thought feeding a baby outside your family would cause problems, as the wet nurse's milk would (at a guess) contain her mana. But as it turns out, some wet nurses in the *Bookworm* universe don't breastfeed at all. Have the terms taken on a new meaning in Yurgenschmidt?

A: Yes, the terms refer to someone a mother trusts to tutor her unbaptized child. The wet nurse spends almost all of her time with the child and could easily be considered their second mother.

Q: For a time, Hartmut was like Roderick's personal editor, bringing out the best in his work and reminding him when his stories were due. Are there editors working for Rozemyne or for Elvira's group of writers?

A: Rozemyne's books go through her workshop before they're finalized. In the same vein, Elvira's writers always get someone else to review their completed works. The task is normally assigned to the printing workshops.

Q: Rozemyne once included production notes on her posters. Does she do the same with her picture books and whatnot? And as a follow-up question, what's her stance on reprints? I assume this applies only to her more popular volumes, but does she use the opportunity to introduce more Japanese customs? Denoting the reprint version is one example that comes to mind. Then there's marketing the series, publicizing future copies, and so on.

A: Colophons are standard practice for a reason—they help with categorization, among other things. I'm not sure about marketing, though. It probably wouldn't be done unless there was ink and paper to spare.

Q: Do nobles celebrate their birthdays? Do they even know the day they were born?

A: No on both counts. At most, they celebrate their birth season for their baptism or coming-of-age ceremony.

Q: If nobles don't have set birthdays, at what point are they considered ten years old and eligible to attend the Royal Academy?

A: They have their baptism ceremonies and receive their capes at the start of winter socializing. Those born between the beginning of spring and the end of the subsequent winter are put in the same grade.

Q: Is there a way to tell someone's status in noble society without speaking to them? Like wearing indoor shoes of a certain color, or what have you. If not, would you need to guess based on the quality of a person's clothes and the way they carry themselves?

A: You can't tell a person's status by their appearance alone,

which is why a good noble treats everyone with respect—at least until they’ve deduced the status, relationships, and duchy of whomever they’re speaking with. Philine is a laynoble, for example, but any mednobles who get too overbearing with her might find themselves face-to-face with her archnoble coworkers.

Q: We’ve seen archducal family members reduced to archnobles—Karstedt and the first Giebe Groschel come to mind—but was that really the best approach? Would it not have been less problematic to adopt them?

A: Not all adoptions are good; one’s new parents might be abusive or act with certain cruel objectives in mind. Descending to a lower status—whether through marriage or adoption—is much easier than trying to ascend.

Q: If someone graduates the archduke candidate course only to be reduced to the rank of an archnoble, are they at least guaranteed to become a giebe?

A: No. Most people in that situation would remain in the castle and support their aub.

Q: Within the privacy of their dorms, do the boys of the Royal Academy say things that would make the girls blush?

A: Quite a lot comes up. They’re at a curious age.

Q: Are most of the Royal Academy’s professors single?

A: One could describe them all as the weirdest, most obsessive nobles in the Sovereignty—so yeah, many of them are single. Some of the women became Sovereign nobles to avoid arranged marriages in the first place.

Q: Does the aub need to be present each time someone teleports between their duchy and the Royal Academy? Can anyone provide the mana required to activate the circle?

A: The aub might need to open the door to the teleportation hall. Otherwise, there’s no need for them to attend. Students teleport to the Royal Academy over the course of a week, remember—imagine the aub having to stand around the entire time!

Using the teleportation circle requires the aub’s permission, so the knights in attendance have authorization feystones. The mana to activate the circle comes from those who wish to teleport.

Q: Are the knights in the Royal Academy’s teleportation hall stationed there all the time, or does the entire Knight’s Order participate on a rotating schedule? The lack of remarks about their capes leads me to believe they’re from Ehrenfest, but where do they live?

A: The entire Order participates. They normally live in Ehrenfest and use the teleportation circle to reach their place of work—the dormitory.

Q: Knights use schtappe-made weapons in combat, but where do their shields come from? Feystones?

A: Both come from the person's schtappe. You learn how to make them as part of the knight course.

Q: Who was the bigwig speaking at the advancement ceremony?

A: One of the professors. They weren't involved with Rozemyne's year, so she didn't recognize them.

Q: Do the duchy rankings apply to those working at the Royal Academy?

A: Not officially—though some people still cling to their status.

Q: Are there emergency rooms near the knight building? The students taking the knight course must get injured all the time. Do the apprentice scholars trying to become healers practice on them?

A: Yes, there's a medical room, and the professor who runs it uses patients as teaching fodder. It's mostly for knights like Damuel who have a hard time healing themselves or paying for rejuvenation potions...

Q: Could the Dunkelfelger students excluded from becoming knights not have taken the course anyway? Alongside the attendant or scholar course, I mean. Manawise, it must have been viable for the archnobles, and they've got no shortage of passion.

A: The duchy forbids it. Only a certain number of students are allowed to become knights, and those who fail the selection exams are made scholars or attendants of the sword against their will. The knight course would only distract them and cause problems. That said, they're still allowed to train with the apprentice knights in the dormitory.

Q: Did everyone participate in the welcoming of the new students during Rozemyne's first year? Were those of the former Veronica faction focused on Roderick?

A: Everyone attended, and there were more than enough upperclassmen to entertain the first-years. As for who focused on whom, many of the older students drew lots.

Wilfried already had retainers by the time he enrolled, so he depended on them to host him. Rozemyne hadn't decided on anyone but Cornelius and Angelica, so she stayed with their family and those who wanted to serve her. Factions played an important role as well. Philine was welcomed by the neutral students, Roderick by the former

Veronica faction, Gregor by his fellow retainers, and so on.

Q: As I understand it, having a schtappe is required to prepare a name stone. Do you need a schtappe to accept someone else's stone?

A: Anyone who's baptized and able to control their mana can accept a name. That said, there's no precedent of anyone without a schtappe actually doing it.

Q: Could a person give their name to someone with less mana?

A: Yes, but it wouldn't be easy. The person being bound would need to undergo an excruciating amount of pain.

Q: For the graduation ceremony's dedication whirl, what happens when there isn't enough of one gender? Do men ever whirl as goddesses or women as gods?

A: No, archduke candidates would never whirl as gods or goddesses of the opposite gender. Fifth-year students would fill the vacancy.

Q: We know there are substitutes for the dedication whirl. Do they receive a chance to introduce themselves? If there aren't any vacancies for them to fill, do they sing in the chorus with those not chosen to play an instrument?

A: Because they're only substitutes, they aren't introduced. They stay in the chorus when they aren't needed.

Q: We've seen rings, armbands, and necklaces throughout the series so far. Does anyone in Yurgenschmidt wear earrings or other piercings?

A: Because their accessories double as magic tools, nobles tend to prefer things that are easier to remove and much harder to lose. Pierced ears do exist in Yurgenschmidt, but most would opt for ear cuffs instead.

Q: What counts as formal dress in Yurgenschmidt? I'm particularly curious about accessories.

A: Like in Japan, it varies depending on the occasion. You wouldn't wear the same clothes to weddings, funerals, and graduation ceremonies. Should people wear the divine colors of the season, their black Royal Academy uniform, their cape...?

As far as actual requirements go, wearing a ring on the left middle finger is a must for any noble. Engaged or married women also need to wear their feystone necklaces. Otherwise, tweak your fashion as you please! I don't specify anything beyond the absolute essentials, so you won't always see the same accessories in the series' drawings.

Q: Yurgenschmidt culture requires adult women to wear their hair

up and underage women to leave theirs down. How does this work for women with short hair? I was also wondering about haircuts. Do commoners cut each other's hair while nobles entrust the duty to their attendants?

A: Women don't cut their hair any shorter than their shoulders. Otherwise, it's as you say.

Q: The series's artwork shows capes in various sizes. What happens when a person's cape no longer suits them? Do they order a new one?

A: The first cape is given freely. Subsequent capes need to be purchased.

Q: Roderick described the *ternisbefallen* as having eyes where a dog would. Do nobles keep dogs as pets? The only one we've encountered was in a lower-city restaurant.

A: Just because they're nobles doesn't mean they only keep feybeasts as pets. Some have normal dogs.

Q: As part of her proposal, Clarissa forced mana into her victim (lol) to see whether they were compatible. Was she testing his capacity? Or was she able to check his elements too?

A: It was more about his capacity. That said, while you can't exactly feel another person's elements, there are some subtle indications: the resistance you feel, the wavelength of their mana, its color, its firmness... and, of course, how well it mixes with your own mana.

Q: How far apart can two people's mana be before marriage is out of the question? Like, say the first person's mana was at 100.

A: I've never had to put it into numbers, so I'm not really sure. Maybe a range between 70 and 130. It depends on whether they can sense each other's mana.

Q: Couples mix mana by holding hands and exchanging fluids, right? Could you use the same method to absorb someone else's mana and regenerate your own?

A: You can't touch a person's mana without first concentrating mana in your hand as if you were forming a *schtappe*. Simply holding their hand won't do anything. As for absorbing another's mana to regenerate your own, unless you've dyed that person's mana, your body will try to reject it. You'll technically have more mana inside you, but the sensation would make your skin crawl.

Dyed married couples could use your proposed absorption method, as could parents and their biological children. But unless they're on the verge of death without any rejuvenation potions, they wouldn't

even attempt it. They would simply stick to medicine.

Q: Is the sole purpose of mana-mixing to see whether two people's capacities align? Do people want their partner to have elements they don't so their kids have more mana?

A: Capacities are important, but mana mixing is mostly about checking the color of a person's mana. Though you could get them to dye a feystone, it wouldn't be an accurate representation. The method also measures the resistance the couple might encounter when trying to dye each other and whether their mana is likely to, well, mix.

The tool most commonly used during mana mixing is a board with button-like feystones on either end. Two people touch the buttons and channel mana into them. The speed at which the mana meets, how it reacts, how easily it bleeds together, and the like are all measured.

Q: It was mentioned that Leonore and Cornelius pushed their mana into one another. Does that kind of thing lead to a prickly, tingling feeling?

A: They didn't use potions to dye each other's mana, so yes. The resistance made them feel all prickly inside.

Q: Back when the Royal Academy's "special arrangements" were being made, the question came up of whether the jureve user had a partner. Was that in reference to how one's mana gets dyed through marriage? Does dyeing a person's mana impact their personality?

A: Quite. After marriage, their mana will not be the same as when they were born.

Q: What decides the color of a noble's mana at birth? Assuming it's a combination of their parents' colors, won't everyone's look the same after enough generations?

A: Although it does come from a fusion of the mother's and the father's mana, there's variation even among brothers and sisters. A noble's color also depends on the amount of mana they received, their birth season, and many other factors that would prevent homogeneity. As one grows and obtains divine protections from the gods, the color changes even further.

Q: Are the royal children's retainers all adults? Do the kids not have confidants their own age?

A: Yes, they're all adults. Royals attending the Academy might sometimes poach students they've befriended and take them to the Sovereignty, but not before they've graduated.

Q: As we know, retainers are sometimes passed down from parent to child. Are any of the Zent's or Magdalena's retainers with Hildebrand at the Royal Academy?

A: Yes. Royals are given retainers when they're baptized and only choose their own when they enter the Royal Academy. Hildebrand was raised away in a villa, so his parents chose people they could trust to be his head attendant and whatnot.

Q: Assuming they weren't retainers and graduated from the Royal Academy with their current grades and mana capacities, what jobs would Philine, Roderick, Hartmut, Lieseleta, and Brunhilde be suited to?

A: Philine and Roderick would sort and record the taxed goods teleported to the castle during the Harvest Festival or perform other writing-based tasks that wouldn't require much mana. Hartmut would probably become a tax official, meaning he would travel the provinces to activate their magic circles and converse with the giebels. Lieseleta would serve as a castle attendant, hosting visitors, preparing for the seasonal feasts, helping out during the archducal family's tea parties, and managing the playroom. Brunhilde wouldn't be working in the castle at all; instead, she'd use the leadership skills her mother taught her to support Giebe Groschel.

Q: Is seeing a man and a woman go into a hidden room together the Yurgenschmidt equivalent of seeing two people sneak into a love hotel?

A: Ehhh... There's nowhere more private than a noble's hidden room. Anyone inside is completely separated from the outside world—from anyone who could intervene in an emergency—which makes the space exceedingly dangerous. If you want a Japanese equivalent, imagine being in a room with someone of the opposite sex, knowing full well that their parents are out for the rest of the day. Though hidden rooms *can* be put to indecent use, that isn't their sole purpose.

Q: Can you channel mana into parts of a noble not attached to their body—stray hairs, nails, or even severed fingers—to turn them into feystones? I ask because we've seen it work with feybeasts.

A: Indeed, some parts of a feybeast are easier to turn into feystones. The same is true for nobles.

Q: Do nobles need to wear their magic rings on a certain finger?

A: Their left middle finger—unless it's been severed.

Q: About the rings nobles wear—are they tools with their own magic circles? Or are the feystones just catalysts?

A: They're magic tools with circles necessary for shooting out mana.

Q: Is it hard to use the memory-searching magic tool on someone with more mana than you?

A: Mana compatibility is more of a concern.

Q: Would the price of the magic tools given to kids increase if Ferdinand put his ultra-nasty rejuvenation potion on the market?

A: The tools' prices vary depending on their use. The ones designed to receive mana from a laynoble child cost less than those meant for the son or daughter of an archduke.

Q: In battle, knights must put a lot of strength behind their swings. Do their schtappe-made weapons ever break?

A: Yes, they do. The unlucky knight(s) would need to retrieve and reabsorb the pieces.

Q: During the era when nobles obtained their schtappes as adults, how did they learn to use ordonnanzes and the like?

A: Through observation. They spent years watching their seniors and professors easily complete tasks with their schtappes and took lessons with a magic tool that served as a practice schtappe. Lessons weren't even necessary by the time they obtained the real thing.

Q: Are there things that absolutely can't be done without a schtappe? Could you perform a waschen with a ring or feystone?

A: There are, but I can't elaborate—not yet, at least. As for your second question, there are magic tools dedicated to performing waschens. Many laynobles find them more reliable than relying on their schtappes.

Q: Some rejuvenation potions have been shown to heal wounds. Is this true for the most common variety? If a potion is strong enough, does it heal the user instantly?

A: It depends on the kind of wound, but yes, even standard potions can heal. Bear in mind, though, that any blood the person lost won't be returned to their body. You'd need to clean it away with a waschen.

Q: Nobles have protective magic circles on their capes, right? Could they further improve their defenses by adding the same circles to their clothes, underwear, and socks?

A: Only for as long as they kept those circles full. Most nobles would rather preserve their mana in case they need to fight or flee, so while your idea does work, it wouldn't be the best choice for everyone.

Q: How did Hartmut learn to make name stones? I doubt it was taught as part of the scholar course.

A: Name stones are common enough that each of Rozemyne's retainers has an opinion about them. Creating them isn't part of the

Royal Academy's curriculum, but a scholar who limits himself to the magic tools covered during his classes would make for a third-rate retainer. Hartmut wants to be Rozemyne's head scholar, so he's studying a great breadth of subjects. He hates that he can't compare to Ferdinand and can't stand how little reading Roderick has been doing despite being an apprentice mendscholar. The methods for making commonplace magic tools are recorded in books found in the Royal Academy's library and the professors' laboratories.

Q: Would it cause problems if a person's name stone were of poor quality or their mana changed after they'd given their name?

A: An insufficient stone would prevent the person's name from being completely sealed, rendering their name-swearing incomplete. A change in mana could outright destroy the stone, but only in the most extreme cases.

Q: As I understand it, only the recipient of a name can touch a name stone they've dyed—but what if someone else tries anyway? If another person obtains the stone, can they hurt the name-sworn and their master?

A: Name stones are enveloped in a white cocoon of the master's mana, meaning they can't be touched at all. If someone else obtained the stone, that same cocoon would prevent them from giving any orders. Only by removing it would they be able to steal the name for themselves.

Q: Do name stones need to be returned in a certain way? Like, does the master need to remove their mana?

A: It requires the involvement of the person who gave their name or the person to whom the name was given.

Q: We've seen empty feystones absorb Myne's mana simply by being touched to her forehead. Were they magic tools? Regular feystones don't seem to have the same properties, considering how much Roderick struggled to fill one in class.

A: The feystones don't do that on their own; Ferdinand channels Myne's leaking mana into them in the same way that he would transfer mana between ingredients. Feystones naturally reabsorb mana they've lost, so an empty feystone will gradually absorb mana of its element, but the process is too slow to be used in an emergency.

Q: You need permission to read the High Bishop's bible, so why was Myne able to see its contents when Ferdinand read to her? Was permission granted to everyone in the room?

A: Ferdinand was ordered to "read the bible to a girl named Myne when she arrives," so the text was visible to them both.

Q: Are there any other spells that are shortened versions of prayers, like how the Knight's Order uses a short version of the Darkness prayer?

A: Of course. Prayers are so long that generations of researchers have worked on shortening them.

Q: Is there a logic to where black feybeasts are found in Yurgenschmidt? Their presence in Dunkelfelger makes me think it has nothing to do with the country gates. Did the Dunkelfelgerians know the black-weapon spell before Werkestock was split apart?

A: As we explored in Part 3, certain regions are associated with certain elements. Black feybeasts appear in regions where the Darkness element is strong. The people of Dunkelfelger know the black-weapon spell because of their duchy's long history. Using the spell might be forbidden, but that doesn't mean they stopped passing it down.

Q: What does Damuel think of Rozemyne, considering how long he's been serving her?

A: He thinks she's an exceptionally hard worker, that she's grown so much since they first met, and that she's got a good handle on things—though he wonders how long their peace is going to last. He knows better than anyone that Rozemyne only enjoys her current freedoms because she has Ferdinand protecting her. In a sense, he's actually quite worried.

Q: As of Part 4 Volume 7, how does Adolphine feel about Rozemyne? Did she protect her from Detlinde out of camaraderie?

A: Adolphine doesn't dislike our protagonist, but I wouldn't go as far as to call it camaraderie. She just sees value in staying on good terms with Rozemyne.

Q: What does Raimund think about Rozemyne? She gives him food and always prods him about living a healthier life, so does he see her as a nagging little sister?

A: He was moved to tears that she got him in touch with Ferdinand, especially because he never thought an archduke candidate would assist a mednoble from another duchy. Sure, he thinks she's weird, but he also knows she's a good person. Though he envies her abundance of mana and the fact she can perform as many experiments as she wants, he's glad that his talents can be of use to her.

Q: On the one hand, Rozemyne is so extremely knowledgeable that she dominates the Royal Academy's tests and classes. On the other, her social education (regarding socializing and mana nuances) is so abysmally lacking that she's a source of constant problems. How

did this contradiction come about?

A: Oh, where to begin? Nobody explains social matters in a way Rozemyne would understand. Her intuition and common sense from her previous life are always getting in the way. Ferdinand doesn't care about changing Rozemyne's mindset as long as she can at least *pretend* to be a good noble—a thought process that came from his twisted past. Her true and adoptive parents watch on in silence, assuming the others will take care of any issues. There's an overwhelming lack of time... And so on.

Q: What does Clarissa's family think about her marriage?

A: “No sooner did she give up on becoming an apprentice knight than she started spouting nonsense again. Shouldn't an apprentice scholar think things through a little more? She isn't even in love—she's acting out of respect and admiration for Lady Rozemyne. What's going to happen when her passion cools?”

Q: How did Clarissa approach Cornelius about a potential engagement?

A: She learned while gathering intelligence that he was Rozemyne's elder brother, so she outright asked whether he had a political engagement lined up. He replied that things were “going in that direction.” Hartmut was on good terms with plenty of girls and spread the fact he was single, so Clarissa changed targets and moved in for the kill.

Q: It was said that Clarissa couldn't become an apprentice knight because of her small stature, but she lines up pretty well with Hartmut, who's described as being tall. Did she suddenly shoot up between the test and the most recent volume?

A: I wouldn't say that. Dunkelfelger's selection exams take place between a child's baptism and their enrollment at the Royal Academy. Clarissa was already a fifth-year when she was introduced to Rozemyne. To put it in Japanese terms, her growth started when she was an elementary schooler, and now she's old enough to be in high school.

Q: I thought people used to consider Georgine the best candidate to rule Ehrenfest, but there was no sign of that in the third fanbook. At what point in her life was she considered the duchy's next aub?

A: From her birth until Sylvester's baptism.

Q: How were Karstedt and Bonifatius treated when Veronica was at her peak?

A: Bonifatius was her brother-in-law who trained to be an archduke. He wasn't at all interested in becoming Aub Ehrenfest, so

she saw him as a potential ally. Her thoughts about Karstedt were a little more complicated. She hoped that he would marry Georgine or agree to be lowered to the rank of an archnoble, fearing that he might try to rule the duchy despite only being the grandson of a past archduke. Karstedt didn't much care for the role and thought Veronica's constant aggression was tiresome, so he did what he could to avoid it. This contributed to her growing ego and taught her that she could simply bully and manipulate to get what she wanted.

Q: Veronica has an exceptionally large mana capacity. Shouldn't she have been adopted into the archducal family?

A: Ahrensbach might have pushed for her to become the next aubor, even worse, tried to force a groom from another duchy onto her. Making her a first wife was the more acceptable option.

Q: I'm curious how Ferdinand felt when asked what "please dye me in your colors" meant. How did he respond?

A: "Fool! Ask someone else!" Then he wrote essentially a textbook on mana peculiarities.

Q: Did Ferdinand sword dance *and* dedication whirl? He must have had the grades to be chosen as a sword dancer.

A: Archduke candidates don't take part in the sword dance. They only dedication whirl.

Q: So, is Sylvester completely oblivious to where Ferdinand came from?

A: Correct. He sees Ferdinand only as his half-brother whom his father brought home one day.

Q: Traugott seems a little young to be Justus's nephew. Is there a reason for that?

A: Traugott's father was sickly. It took him a while to have children.

Q: Justus is divorced, but what are his ex-wife and child doing now? Was the latter baptized under his ex-wife's family?

A: His ex-wife received a handsome sum of money from the divorce and now spends her time in a villa on her house's estate. Their child was baptized as a noble.

Q: If she had the mana capacity for it, would Heidemarie have aimed to marry Ferdinand instead of Eckhart?

A: I doubt it. She would have accepted a proposal from him, but not with any real enthusiasm. Admiring someone to the point of worship isn't the same as wanting to spend every day with them as a married couple.

Q: Is there any friction between Eglantine and her uncle, the aub? Like, maybe they seem to get along but are secretly disgusted with each other. Did he have the same dynamic with her mother?

A: I wouldn't say they're disgusted with each other; they're distant because of their social standings. The previous aub's rant about how to properly treat Eglantine caused some blowback, and now her uncle is a tad noncooperative. He was on good terms with his sister.

Q: Was Eglantine adopted by Klassenberg instead of Trauerqual because the civil war stretched on for too long?

A: That factored into it, but there were other reasons too. The previous Aub Klassenberg was so concerned about another assassination plot that he didn't want to let Eglantine out of his sight. Her adoption into the royal family would also have set her up to become the next Zent. Trauerqual won the civil war largely thanks to Klassenberg's involvement, so he was politically considerate to its archducal couple.

Q: Lady Detlinde spins her wheels a lot during tea parties. Is she, by any chance, a bit thick?

A: She doesn't pay as much attention to her words and surroundings as someone her age and with her status probably should. She's not entirely to blame, though. As the third child of her duchy's third wife—and a girl, to boot—she had a perfunctory upbringing and was never expected to amount to much. That's why she's so proud about her mother becoming the first wife and why she always boasts about being Ahrensbach's next aub.

Q: Was Rudiger baptized an archnoble, then elevated into the archducal family when his father became an aub?

A: No, he and his parents were archducal family members to begin with.

Q: How did Detlinde act around Rudiger before Rozemyne and Wilfried entered the Royal Academy? Did she see him as a country bumpkin but treat him like family nonetheless?

A: They never interacted.

Q: Where was Arthur, the third prince's head attendant, born?

A: Gilessenmeyer. He's often troubled by the teaching philosophy of his charge's Dunkelfelgerian mother.

Q: Why did Professor Rauffen join the Royal Academy instead of the Sovereign Knight's Order?

A: Because he wanted to be a teacher. Or, as he would probably explain it, "So I can show those kids *true* ditter!" He joined the Royal Academy to proselytize educate his students.

Q: Has working with Professors Hirschur and Fraularm changed Professor Rauffen's perspective on women? Did he use to think none of that mattered in the face of ditter?

A: Well, what can I say except that he learned women have a lot going on too? (Haha.)

Q: If Professor Gundolf had children or grandchildren, would they be archduke candidates?

A: Yes, assuming they were talented enough for the aub to have recognized and adopted them.

Q: Did Professor Gundolf take the scholar course as well as the archduke candidate course? Or did he just happen to take a lot of extra classes?

A: The latter. Rozemyne wants to be a librarian, so she's taking classes relevant to that goal. Gundolf, on the other hand, took whatever classes caught his attention.

Q: Are Letizia's maternal half-siblings attending the Royal Academy as archduke candidates?

A: Yes, with her paternal half-siblings. Her father is an archducal family member, but her brother would have been an archnoble. Only by working hard to display his excellence and securing an adoption by the aub and his second wife was he able to become an archduke candidate.

Q: Are the gods, their subordinates, and the religious tales in *Ascendance of a Bookworm* all your own creations? Did you base them on any real-world examples?

A: They are. I took inspiration from Grecian, Roman, and various Japanese myths, but mostly came up with my own ideas to better complement the story.

Q: What's the significance of the Goddess of Earth being at the very center of the altar?

A: The events that led to Yurgenschmidt's creation were all centered around her. She was the one Ewigeliebe wanted more than any other, spurring her siblings to hurry to her rescue. Her treatment by the God of Life was the reason Erwaermen flew into a frenzy. And it was her daughter, the Goddess of Wisdom, who bestowed the Grutrissheit upon the first Zent.

Q: The moon turns red on the Night of Flutrane in spring and purple on the Night of Schutzaria in autumn. Does it also change color during summer and winter?

A: No. There's neither a Night of Leidenschaft nor a Night of Ewigeliebe.

Q: In the world of *Bookworm*, each year is 420 days long—roughly two months longer than years as we know them. Does that mean someone who’s twenty in Yurgenschmidt would actually look twenty-three to Rozemyne?

A: Everyone looks as old as I would expect—which is pretty tough to explain, now that I think about it. Anytime I’m describing a character to Shiina-san, I say whether they should appear younger, older, or the same as their depicted age and then leave the rest to her.

Q: It seems that Yurgenschmidt doesn’t have clocks. How do people judge the time? Do they use their internal clocks?

A: Bells, the position of the sun, and their own circadian rhythms.

Q: Would a giebe and their family have more status than other nobles of the same rank?

A: Yes, they would. Because they’re in charge of managing their province, they tend to have more mana than the others of their rank.

Q: Are winters in Klassenberg dramatically colder than in Ehrenfest?

A: Yes. That’s why their underground cities are so advanced. Long live magecraft.

Q: As I understand it, the civil war comprised savage kidnappings on both sides, skirmishes in the form of ditter matches, and then two large, climactic battles similar to the Siege of Osaka’s winter and summer campaigns. Was it actually more like the Onin War, with major battles being fought over a longer period of time?

A: After the second prince died and the Grutrissheit disappeared, there were kidnappings and drawn-out skirmishes between factions on either side of the ill, dying king. He was unable to name a successor due to the missing Grutrissheit, so upon his death, the first and third princes immediately deployed their troops in what would turn out to be a climactic battle. The third prince won, but the first prince’s faction refused to accept the outcome and put his assassination in motion. Klassenberg secured the third prince’s last surviving child, Eglantine, and continued to fight in his honor. Well, for revenge, really. The fourth prince and unwilling fifth prince became the leaders of either side, and what followed were more abductions and skirmishes, which stretched on for a very long time. In the end, Dunkelfelger allied with the fifth prince, swiftly securing his victory. All that remained was the cleanup—but while its scale was being discussed, the fourth prince’s faction kidnapped and murdered the fifth prince’s daughter, inspiring a purge even greater than expected.

If you think about it from start to finish, it was a pretty long war.

Q: How many doors connect the Royal Academy to the Sovereign villas? Part of me thinks that if each branch royal received their own villa, there wouldn't be enough doors for them all. How would they deal with that problem?

A: The Academy has doors for the supreme gods, the Eternal Five, and their subordinates, which allow access to the royal palace, the villas, each duchy's dorm, and the tea rooms. As it stands, many of the doors aren't being used. Problems would arise if there were too many branch royals to deal with, which is why their growth is carefully managed. They're moved into the duchies through adoptions and engagements or made to marry each other to combine their houses.

Q: I have a question about the Royal Academy's written lessons. Giving students a test on their first day and allowing anyone who passes to skip the class sounds like a fresh—and pretty logical—approach to education. Are there any real-world countries that use this system?

A: Not to my knowledge. I came up with it to improve the pacing. Grade skipping is the closest example I can think of.

Q: I noticed “Hirsch” among Ehrenfest's provinces. Was that the in-universe inspiration for Hirschur's name, or is it purely a coincidence? Maybe they aren't so alike in Yurgenschmidt's language.

A: It's a coincidence. Back when I outlined the plot, she was just “Dormitory Supervisor.” It wasn't until later that I had to give her a name. Nothing in the dictionary I was browsing stood out to me, so I ended up taking the name of my daughter's homeroom teacher, turning the kanji into German, and then taking out a snippet. I took a similar approach when naming Primevere, though Klassenberg's names are taken from French, not German.

Q: Why does Raublut look so... *brutish* despite being an archnoble? Ferdinand said that nobles of a higher rank are naturally more beautiful.

A: Shiina-san probably wanted to make sure his villainy shone through. I gave her the okay. He's not a prince, so there's nothing wrong with him looking brutish.

Q: Was your main focus the setting or the characters when you first wrote *Bookworm*? Did you ever consider someone other than Myne for the protagonist?

A: Neither. I started with the story and then created the characters and the world around it, so to speak. The thought of someone else being the protagonist never even crossed my mind.

Q: The Tokyo Printing Museum collab, the anthologies, the anime

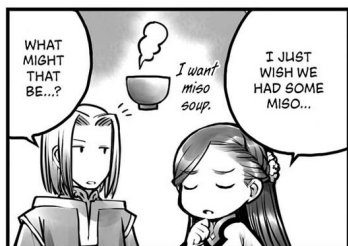
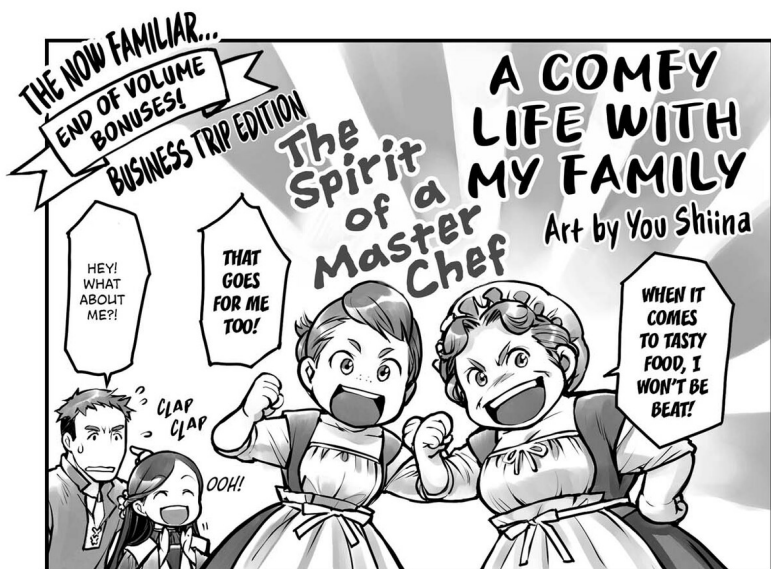
adaptation—there sure are a lot of *Bookworm*-related events going on at the moment! Is it TO Books that arranges them all or what? Please explain the process in as much detail as you can!

A: Before we started work on the adaptations—the manga, the anime, and the drama CDs—I was asked whether I wanted to sell the series as part of a media mix. “It’ll mean entrusting aspects of your work to other people, and no matter how hard you try to keep them all consistent, they’re bound to grow apart,” they told me. “Some creators find this too stressful, so we want to check with you first.” I gave the go-ahead and set the wheels in motion!

One of my own proposals was the merchandise. “I was thinking about getting a key chain made for my car keys,” I wrote in an email to TO Books. “I want a custom one with the Myne Workshop’s crest, but I can only order them in bulk. Do you think we could sell the spares?” They soon got back to me: “That’s a great idea. I want one too. We can make them ourselves and sell them on our online store.” Thus began the creation of *Bookworm* merch!

As for our collaborations, such as with the Printing Museum, the other party sends TO Books a document explaining what they have in mind. My editor then passes the information along to me, and my battle with my ever-busy schedule begins. If everything works out, we accept, but there have been a few that we’ve had to turn down.

Truth be told, the editor has it worse than anyone else. Whether an idea comes from me or someone else, they have to get involved. It can’t be easy! (Haha.)



BEHOLD, THE LOVE GODS!



☆ Otto, trampled

OH MY SAINT!



Messages from the Creators

Miya Kazuki

Here we are—the fourth fanbook. This year saw the releases of an official anthology, the Junior Bunko edition, *and* the anime adaptation. I feel moved, but also somehow like they had nothing to do with me.

You Shiina

Another fanbook! Once again, the cover art is packed with food. All the food in *Bookworm* looks so tasty, doesn't it?

Suzuka

This time, we included the gods' designs to match the manga adaptation. I spent a lot of time figuring out and perfecting their hairstyles, clothes, and so on, which makes me feel nothing but awe for Shiina-sensei, who designs new characters basically every time a novel is published...!

Ryo Namino

I'm in charge of Part 3's manga adaptation. This is my second time participating in a fanbook, and I hope to reach a third as the world of *Bookworm* expands ever further!



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Ascendance of a Bookworm: Official Fanbook Volume 4
by Miya Kazuki

Translated by quof
Edited by Kieran Redgewell
Lettering by Nicole Roderick

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Illustrations by You Shiina, Suzuka
Cover illustration by You Shiina

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Original Japanese edition published in 2019 by TO Books, Tokyo.
This English edition is published by arrangement with TO Books,
Tokyo

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Ebook edition 1.0: July 2024